

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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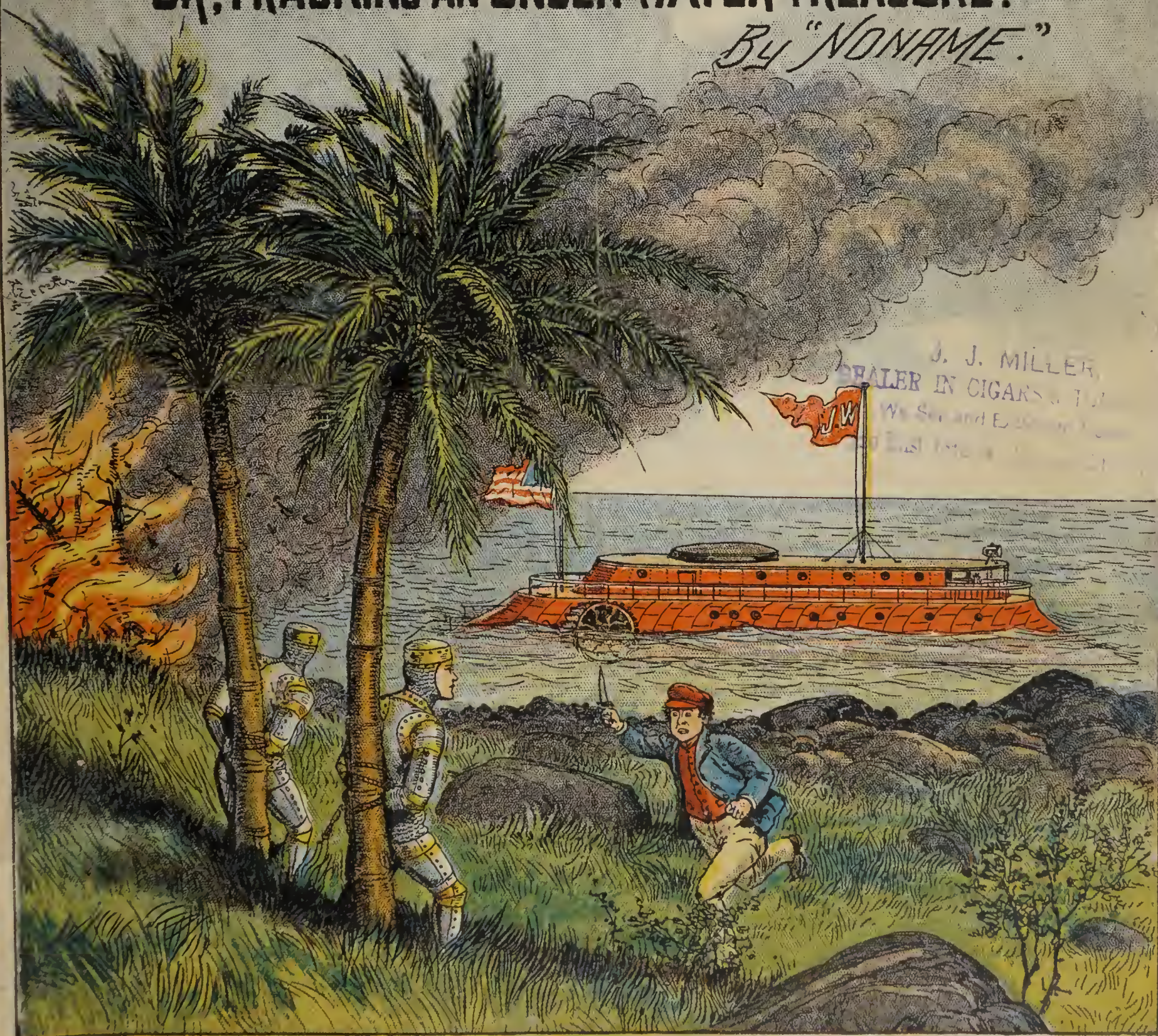
No. 242.

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Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS OCEAN SLEUTH-HOUND; OR, TRACKING AN UNDER WATER TREASURE.

By "NONAME."



Just then Fritz came running up to them. "I told you so," said Jack to Bunker. "Cut our bonds—quick!" the detective gasped. Fritz liberated them, and away they rushed for the shore, where the Sleuth-Hound lay on the water.

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OR,

Tracking an Under Water Treasure.

J. J. MILLER,

DEALER IN CIGARS & TOBACCOES,

We Sell and Exchange Books,

320 East 18th St. New York City, N.Y.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT INVENTION.

A wild, March storm was raging along the Atlantic sea-coast not many years ago, the high wind sweeping the surf in upon the beach in huge, rolling billows that broke like thunder about the rocky headlands of Wrightstown Bay.

There was a small, but pretty fisher village at the head of this bay, the lights in the windows of the cottages gleaming out ruddily upon the dark, gloomy night, and very few people were in the rainy streets to brave the storm.

Most prominent of all the houses in the place was a large and handsome mansion in the suburbs that stood in the midst of a fine garden, the end of which was cut off by a creek that flowed in from the bay.

Upon the bank of the creek stood an enormous workshop in the garden, and the owner of the house, grounds and shop was named Jack Wright.

His father was the namesake of the village, and had been a great inventor, but when the old gentleman died, Jack became famous as a greater inventor than his parent, for he had built many marvellous contrivances and amassed a very large fortune from the use of his devices.

The boy inventor was not of age, and yet his name and fame were known in all parts of the globe for having successfully mastered the mysteries of submarine navigation, aerial flight and overland electric motive force without the need of a trolley system.

Jack, at the time alluded to, was a dashing looking fellow, with dark eyes and hair, sharp features and an athletic figure of great strength, which he invariably kept attired in the most faultless clothing.

He did not reside alone in that great, handsome mansion, for there dwelt with him a fat, Dutch boy a little older than himself, named Fritz Schneider, who Jack had once picked up in the village looking for a job, as he was an expert electrician.

Tim Topsey was another resident of the house with Jack.

He was an ancient sailor, who had been in the navy with the young inventor's father, and returned with a wooden leg and a glass eye.

The great workshop was ablaze with electric lights that shot a brilliant glow out upon the tempest, and from within the building came the pounding of hammers on metal plates, the buzzing of machinery and the various other noises incidental to such a place.

Upon the ground floor of the main building was a flooded cellar, with an iron platform running around it, and two huge doors at the end which opened out upon the creek.

In the water of this flooded basin, there floated a new invention of Jack Wright's, which was certainly a most singular looking device, over which an army of men were swarming, plying their tools and rapidly bringing it to a state of completion.

It was a submarine boat, of most peculiar shape, about two hundred feet long.

The keel was as straight as a rule, and tapered to sharp points at either end, the slopes running to a flat deck, only half the length of the keel, yet curving out like a bow on either side, and railed in.

Every bit of the hull was made of heavy plates of tempered steel, riveted at the joints so perfectly that not a joint was to be seen.

At the bow, there was a large deadlight, along the garboards were three tubed openings, in the 'midship section five more deadlights were shown, covered by heavy plate glass, and there were two more at the stern.

On either side was a small water wheel on a shaft that ran through the after part of the boat, the sternmost section of the keel terminated in a rudder, and above it extended a long screw shaft, with a large propeller.

Strung along on a hollow tube above it were four three-bladed screws, and a single one below them, fastened between the hull and main shaft.

The deck house was cigar shaped and flattened on the top.

It had a pilot-house, with thick plate glass windows, two doors next to it, on either side of them three portholes;

there was a large, powerful searchlight on top, and in back of it a companionway, by which access was had to the upper deck from the rooms inside.

Massive as the exterior shell of the boat was, the skeleton was twice as strong and of great resistance to overcome the enormous pressure to which the boat was to be subjected when submerged to a great depth.

Upon her bow was the name Sleuth-Hound.

As the work went on, a door bearing the name, "Office," was opened in the wall of the building, and the young inventor stepped out on the platform with a plan of the boat in his hand, and pausing near the railing, he glanced keenly at the craft and shouted:

"Tim! Hey, Tim! Come here, will you?"

"Ay, ay, my lad!" promptly responded a gruff voice from within the boat, and out on the gangplank hobbled the old sailor, clad in a seaman's costume, his red face fringed in a frame of sandy whiskers, and a huge chew of navy plug bulging one of his cheeks out.

The old sailor carried a little red monkey named Whiskers under one arm, a big green parrot, called Bismarck, under the other arm.

Whiskers belonged to Tim and Bismarck was owned by Fritz.

They had once captured the bird and beast in Africa, taught them a great many tricks, and the two creatures hated and fought each other continually.

"Have you finished setting the electrical wires from the batteries to the machinery, Tim?" queried the boy as his old friend joined him.

"Oh, Lordy, yes!" replied the sailor with a nod, "an' as soon's these lubbers gets through wi' thar work, an' we charges ther batteries from ther dynamo in the Sleuth-Hound's machinery compartment, she will be ready ter go on a voyage from here to Chiny."

"Good! The men will be through to-night—yes in an hour more," said Jack. "Where is Fritz? Is he on board the boat yet?"

"No. I wish he had been there a moment ago, though," replied Tim in grumbling tones. "Whiskers an' Bismarck wuz a-fightin like fury in the cabin, when I come up from below, an' blast my timber leg if the lubberly parrot ain't near chawed a hole through the monkey's tail. If Fritz had been down below, I'd stove in his lee-scuppers ter even matters up on Whisker's account."

"You separated them, of course?"

"Ay, now, bless yer heart, an' got my finger bit for interferin'," said Tim, with a sigh. "But it is jest my luck. I reckerlect when I wuz aboard o' ther frigate Wabash in ther navy, two o' my messmates got a-fightin', an' I stepped in between them to make peace, when ther blamed slobbs sot upon me, an' ther two on them beat me until I was black and blue. But, I got even, though, the very next day. Durin' ther watch below, I caught them asleep in ther bunks, an' tied them down with pieces of marline. Then I got a rope's end and goin' ter the first one, thet lay flat on his face, I pulled down the covers an' thumped blazes out o' his hind quarters. When I got tired, I soaked the next one in the same way. Arter that I went ter the thirld one, and then to the fourth, an' so on until ther whole eight looked like striped bass —"

"Liar!" cried Jack, holding up his hand and frowning.

"Hey!" gasped Tim, with a guilty start.

"You said there were only two fighters, and now you have got it up to eight."

"Oh, gee! I fergot —" stammered Tim, with a rueful look.

"I think you had better bring the monkey and parrot into the house, Tim."

The old sailor, with his large imagination, had been caught

at his brain-splitting yarn spinning, and discreetly hurried away.

It was a favorite trick of Tim's to spring these fairy stories upon his friends every chance he got; but he was such a terrible liar, they invariably caught him in contradicting himself, or making errors, and exposed him.

When Tim was gone the young inventor muttered:

"By to-morrow my boat will be ready for service. I am glad that I have kept the men working over time to-complete her, for I must take a trip to New York to make some purchases before Sunday, and I prefer to use my new boat instead of going in the train, and making a trial trip of it, so as to be ready for a longer journey I may undertake in the near future."

At that moment a terrific yell reached Jack's ears, coming from the house.

"Shiminey Christmas!" screamed a voice in the tones of Fritz. "Murder! Bolice! Thieves! Robbers! Fire! Rats —rats—rats—rats!"

"Trouble!" muttered Jack, with a frown of annoyance.

He dashed from the shop out into the rainy yard, and glancing up at the house, saw a ladder placed up against the side of it, the end almost reaching an open window of the second story.

On the ladder stood a masked man in a dark cloak and slouched hat, and in the window stood a little, fat Dutch boy with a big stomach, watery blue yes, and yellow hair, his ample figure clad in a suit such as he must have worn in his native country.

He was Fritz, and the man on the ladder whom he had seized was a burglar whom the Dutch boy had caught in the act of sneaking into his bedroom, by means of the ladder.

The robber was making desperate efforts to tear himself free from the clutches of the fat boy, but Fritz clung to him with the greatest determination, and kept on bawling.

Jack took in the situation at a glance.

Then he ran for the ladder.

"Hang on to him, Fritz!" he shouted.

"Donner vetter! Hurry up, alretty!" yelled the boy.

Reaching the ladder, Jack grasped it and pulled it from under the burglar, leaving him struggling in midair in the clutches of Fritz, the pair plainly revealed in the light that was streaming from the window.

Into the house ran Jack, and going up the stairs, two steps at a time, he finally reached the Dutch boy's room and flung the door open.

Fritz was hanging on to the second story thief with all his might, and the young inventor dashed over to the window and lent his aid.

Between the two, they pulled the man into the room and in the struggle that ensued, the burglar's hat and mask were torn off and his features were cleverly revealed to the two boys.

Upon finding that they were getting the best of him, the rascal pulled a pistol from his pocket and aimed it at his assailants, who recoiled, releasing him, as they were not armed.

There came a flash, a report, and the young inventor cried out with pain.

A moment later the thief went out the window and disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

A HUMAN SLEUTH-HOUND.

The Dutch boy rushed up to Jack who was bleeding from a wound in the forehead and who was as pale as death. He stood leaning against the wall.

"Shack! Shack! Vhas yer hurted bad?" cried Fritz in alarm as he shook the boy.

"The ball only grazed me!" gasped the young inventor, recovering gradually from the stunning effect of the bullet. "Don't alarm yourself! I am all right. Where has that rascal gone to, Fritz?"

"He vent down der lightning rod."

"It is useless to pursue him in the darkness of this storm."

"Yah, I think so neider."

"Did he steal anything?"

"Nein! I catch him before he vhas got in."

"Good! There is no loss, then. Go and report the matter to the police, anyhow."

While the young inventor was washing and placing court-plaster on his wound Fritz left the house and apprised the authorities of what had just occurred.

Jack then returned to the workshop in time to see the finishing touches put upon his new boat, and when Tim and Fritz joined him in the course of half an hour, and the workmen departed, the three friends crossed the gangplank and bearded the Sleuth-Hound.

The side door led them into the pilot-house, which was fitted up with fine furniture, a wheel, compass, levers for controlling the working parts, registers and nautical instruments.

Passing through a door, they found themselves in a beautiful cabin, upon which opened several staterooms; in back of it there was a combined kitchen and pantry, while the rear compartment was used as a store room for provisions, ship's stores and the various implements necessary for such work as a submarine boat performed.

The stairs leading to the companionway opening on the upper deck were in the cabin, as also was a flight of stairs leading below.

Jack and his friends closely inspected everything on the pilot-deck, and descending the stairs, found themselves in a large room that was filled with an electrical machine, operated by a storage battery, which was supplied when necessary by a powerful dynamo.

A series of insulated copper wires connected all the working parts, including the electric light, with which the boat was furnished, with the levers up in the pilot-house.

Below the machinery room there were three large rooms used for submerging the boat, the two end ones being utilized for holding all the compressed air from the middle one, so that when water was admitted to the central chamber, in a volume large enough to overcome the buoyancy of the air, the boat could be made to sink to any desired depth.

Every detail of the boat had been carefully constructed, and the young inventor soon saw that she was almost perfect in every way.

"There has been absolutely nothing omitted that I could think of to make her perfect," said the boy as they returned to the pilot-house, and I calculate that she can travel at the rate of eighty miles an hour, remain submerged for a week, if necessary, and go to a greater depth than any boat that I have ever before invented."

"Ay, but what good is she to us, lad?" asked Tim. "We ain't got no use for her, an' here she may lie a long time before we can put her to any earthly good. Haven't ye got no plans laid out fer nuthin'?"

"For the present, I can only think of our trial trip to New York to-morrow," replied Jack, quietly. "You need have no fear, however, for it has always been a singular fatality that no sooner do I complete my inventions than use turns up for them most unexpectedly, and we have always gained enormously by our journeys."

"Listen vunt!" interposed Fritz, holding up his hand. "Vot dot noise is?"

They stopped speaking, and paying strict attention, they heard the footsteps of some one outside the shop, walking on the flagstones.

Jack walked softly to the door and suddenly flung it wide open.

A man was kneeling before the door, peering through the key-hole.

Before he could rise, the boy seized him by the collar, jerked him headfirst into the shop, and closing the door, he locked it.

"Spy!" exclaimed Jack, vehemently. "What are you doing here?"

A startled exclamation pealed from the man's lips, and he sprang to his feet in the midst of the trio, gazing from one to the other.

He was a medium-sized person, of great strength, and attired in a brown sack suit and a derby, his hair all cropped off, and his upper lip bristling with a week's growth of unshaved mustache.

The stranger had a sharp nose, a very keen pair of eyes, and very dark complexion.

He coolly surveyed the young inventor and a grim smile crossed his face.

"You caught me napping that time, didn't you?" he asked ruefully.

"Why don't you answer my question?" demanded the boy with asperity.

"Because you would know as much as I do if I did. Let me out of here."

"Not until you explain your sneaking actions, sir. You are the second fellow I have found skulking around here to-night, and the first rogue got away, but I will bet that you won't be so successful."

"Ah! so there was a prowler here before me, eh?"

"Yes, a second story thief, if I ain't mistaken, and you may be his pal."

"Bosh!" said the stranger. "You are mistaken. "Do you own this place?"

"I do," replied the boy. "Why?"

"Then I would just as lief tell you that I am after your thief."

"Explain yourself clearer, please."

"See this badge?" asked the man, exhibiting a police shield.

"Yes; but it may be a fake," replied the boy promptly.

"No; it is a genuine detective's shield. I am a New York detective."

"Prove it, and I will believe you."

"Read this warrant then," replied the stranger.

He handed Jack a legal document and the boy soon saw that it was a bona fide warrant for the arrest of Dan Clifford, who was accused of committing a theft in New York.

The detective's name was Rob Bunker.

"What sort of a looking individual was this Dan Clifford?" asked the boy, keenly watching the man as he handed back the warrant.

"Aged about forty; short and thick set; rough clothing and felt hat; red hair and eyebrows; florid complexion; two front teeth missing; face mottled with gunpowder; eyes small and jet black; nose very long and —"

"That will do," interposed Jack. "The man you described is identical with the thief whom we caught trying to rob my house a while ago."

"In that case, let me explain that he's wanted according to the warrant you just read," said Rob Bunker, "and I was detailed to hunt him down. He's a noted cracksman. He led me a chase all over the state. I am getting nearer to him now than ever. In fact, I traced him here to-night. Think—"

ing of searching this building for him, I was just peeping through the key-hole when you nabbed me."

"Well, your man is gone—ran away after firing at and wounding me," said Jack. "You won't find him here."

"If he gets back to New York he will get to blowing safes again," said the detective. "Well, I am off. Sorry to have troubled you."

Jack was satisfied with the man's veracity and he let him go, as he saw that the detective was anxious to get on the cracksman's trail.

The boy and his two friends then repaired to the house, and settling themselves in a library, the boy made out a list of articles that he wanted to buy for the Sleuth-Hound in New York the next day.

On the following morning the weather was just as inclement as on the previous night, and our friends busied themselves by stowing their wearing apparel and other things aboard of the submarine boat, as they did not know how long the trial trip would be.

In the afternoon, as the three were just about to leave the house and go aboard the boat, they were startled to hear a shrill yell.

"Hey! Wait for me! Blame yer!" uttered the voice.

"What?" said Jack, as he turned around. "Who was that?"

"Hang yer ugly mug! Ah! poor Polly—pretty Poll!" called the voice.

Every one burst out laughing, for there stood Bismarck, as sedate as a judge, grumbling and growling at them in hoarse, rasping tones on the floor, under a chair.

Whiskers was roosted above the parrot, intently scratching his head, and blinking his little, quick, restless eyes at them, so they carried their pets on board the boat.

Some of Jack's men opened the creek doors, and the boy entered the pilot-house, while Tim and Fritz unmoored the Sleuth-Hound, and grasping one of the levers, he turned the electric current into the machinery.

It instantly got in motion without making the slightest noise when the screw began to revolve, and the boat glided into the stream.

She ran down the creek, submerged to her deadlights, and passed out into Wrightstown Bay, over which hung a dense fog.

Upon the rocky headlands there was a lighthouse, by means of which the boy found the inlet, and passing out upon the heaving sea, the boat began to roll and pitch with the swell.

She answered her rudder admirably.

Tim and Fritz each remained out on the port and starboard decks, but the fog was so dense that they could not see ten yards ahead.

An hour passed by, when Jack was suddenly startled by hearing the hoarse whistle of an ocean steamer off to the windward.

He could not see the vessel, but a few moments afterward he heard the dull, smothered clang of a ship's bell clanging on the leeward.

Both the sounds of the steamer's whistle and the ship's bell were apparently converging toward each other.

It startled the boy, for it suddenly occurred to him that there might be a collision, as the vessel's crews could not see each other.

For a moment a look of horror crept over his eyes, but with a sudden inspiration, he turned one of the levers.

A strong current of electricity shot into the searchlight, and its rays were flung far ahead through the mist, as the boy manipulated a lever, swaying the shaft of piercing light all around.

A moment afterward the light showed him a ship ahead, under a full head of canvas, and a large steamer rushing blindly toward her threatening to crash the ship's hull.

CHAPTER III.

THE BANK BURGLARY.

The Sleuth-Hound's searchlight had 80,000 candle power, and it cut through the fog like a knife, showing the crews of the steamer and sailing vessel their danger.

Instantly their pilots shouted hasty orders, and both vessels swerved to the right and left, passing each other, yet so close were they to colliding that their hulls bumped together with a loud bang.

No damage was done, and they went in opposite directions.

"Saved by the searchlight!" exclaimed Jack breathlessly.

By his prompt action he had prevented a frightful catastrophe, which would have caused the two vessels to go down with all hands on board.

The Sleuth-Hound passed between the two vessels, the rays of her light shooting ahead in the mist, and the boy heard more than one grateful person on each of the ships cry in fervent tones:

"God bless you! You have saved our lives!"

Both vessels vanished from Jack's view in the haze, and Tim and Fritz entered the pilot-house, and the fat boy exclaimed:

"Sherusalem! Vot a glose shafe! Shack, dot shows yer dot efery shibs petter got a searches-light, und den ve don't vos haf so many accidends by der sea some more. Hooray der searches-light for, alretty!"

"I'll allow as it wuz a narrow escape," commented Tim, reflectively, as he took a chew of tobacco, and gave a hitch at his baggy pants; "but I reckerlect when I wuz aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash, in ther navy——"

"Ah, take a tumble!" said the slangy parrot, interrupting him.

"Shut up, yer lubber!" roared Tim, glaring daggers at the bird with his good eye, and aiming a kick at it with his wooden peg. "I was a-sayin', messmates——"

"Give us a rest from your everlasting yarns!" interposed Jack in disgust.

"Avast, thar, lad! This un's a corker. Ter perceed, ther ole craft wuz——"

"Holt on!" yelled Fritz, stopping the old liar again.

And picking up an ancient accordeon Fritz began to grind out a melancholy tune that made Tim rip out a volley of wild expletives, for he hated the Dutch boy's musical instrument with a most intensely bitter spite.

"Haul to!" he roared, getting mad, shaking his fist at the fat boy, and stumping toward him with a threatening look.

"Le' me git my flukes aboard o' that 'ere dashed machine!" he implored. "I wanter pulverize it. I want ter jump on it. I want jam it down through a crack in ther deck, an' drive it through wi' ther heel o' my starboard tackle."

"Vell, I dot, don't dink so," said Fritz, with a grin, as he recoiled.

Tim's temper was aroused, however, and he went stumping after the Dutch boy, who retreated into the cabin with his instrument.

A moment after they vanished Jack heard a scuffle, a furious bang, a wild yell, then a thunder of blows and a terrific struggle.

When Tim reappeared he had a black eye.

Fritz came back with his nose knocked out of joint.

And the boy noticed a freezing coolness between them both.

The Sleuth-Hound kept along the coast, and the boy set the big screw in motion faster, and she made very rapid headway.

In due time she ran into the port of New York, and the boy tied her up at a dock, left Tim and Fritz aboard, and went ashore.

Night shadows had fallen, as the days were short.

Making his way to the store of a ship chandler in South Street, with whom he occasionally dealt, the young inventor ordered what he needed for the boat, and then passed out into the street again.

There was a fine drizzle falling, and glancing at his watch he saw that it was past eight o'clock, for he had been in the store two hours.

Jack intended to return to the boat, but just as he was going back to the dock where he left her a cab went dashing by, in which sat a single occupant, upon whom the light of a street lamp fell.

The boy recognized him at a glance.

"Dan Clifford, the cracksman!" he muttered.

He gazed after the cab for a moment with a strong inclination to run after it, when he saw the vehicle turn into Wall Street and come to a pause half way up the block.

The burglar alighted, said a few words to the driver, and hurried off, while the cab proceeded straight ahead.

"He has alighted!" muttered the boy. "By Jove, it looks suspicious to see that scoundrel acting in this manner! He must have some deep purpose in view to be prowling around Wall Street late at night. I'll watch him."

With this plan in his mind, the boy went around the corner.

The burglar was hastening along the dark, deserted street, half a block ahead of him, and continued on until he drew near Pearl Street.

Here he paused for a moment and glanced at a white stone banking house, beside which a new building was in the course of erection.

Jack slunk back into a doorway, a dozen paces in back of him, and peering around the cornice, saw the man glance up and down the street.

Not a soul was in sight.

Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, the burglar suddenly darted into the new building, and disappeared like a flash in the gloomy first floor.

The watching boy was astonished.

"Hello!" he muttered, softly. "What is he up to now?"

Like a flitting shadow, he crept up to the new building and silently followed his enemy in, when he heard the burglar's soft tread ahead of him, evidently going down a flight of stairs into the cellar.

Jack crept over to the head of the dark stairway and listened.

The faint sound of voices reached his ears, coming from below.

"Hello! Is that you, Tom?" queried the tones of Dan Clifford.

"I thought you'd never come!" growled another voice in the darkness.

"How did you make out with the cashier of the bank next door?"

"All right. I found him home alone this evening, an' tied him up, aimed my pistol at him, an' made him gimme ther combination o' ther lock on ther bank vault. Since then I've been down here a-cuttin' through ther masonry o' ther bank cellar foundation, an' ther hole is finished."

"Well," eagerly asked the burglar, "we're all right with the watchman here."

"Nuthin' ter do but creep in, open ther vault, an' blow ther safe."

"Come ahead, then. I've got a cab waiting outside to take us away as soon as we're ready to go."

Jack saw through the plan of the burglars at once.

It was evident that the watchman of the new building was in league with the burglars, who were intent upon robbing the adjacent banker.

"They have given themselves away!" muttered the boy. "I'll quietly go out and summon the police, who can catch the rascals in the bank vault in the act of robbing it. That will be proof enough for conviction."

He started to leave the building.

But he had not taken two steps when the dazzling light of a bull's-eye lantern was flashed in his eyes suddenly, and he recoiled, catching sight of the faint outlines of a man's figure.

A cry arose to the boy's lips, but ere he could give utterance to it, he suddenly received a stunning blow on the head with a sandbag, which laid him out senseless upon the floor.

It was the treacherous watchman of the new building who attacked him, and when he saw how effective the brutal blow had been, he bound and gagged the boy and left him lying on the floor.

When Jack recovered consciousness it was broad daylight, and he saw several of the workmen who were employed on the building and a policeman whom they had summoned bending over him, loosening the gag and his bonds.

They had just found him there, he heard them say.

Dozens of questions were asked of the boy, and he staggered to his feet, a big lump swollen on top of his head, and recalling to mind what had transpired, he hoarsely exclaimed:

"Don't bother me. I'm all right. Thieves did this for me."

"Thieves? When—where?" demanded the policeman.

"Last night they caught me watching them boring through the cellar of the building into the bank next door, to rob the vaults."

A rush was made for the cellar.

There, sure enough, they found a hole in the wall.

Officers were then summoned, and while they were guarding the bank Jack was taken to police headquarters, where he met with Rob Bunker, and told his story of the burglary to the chief of police.

"It was your prey, Dan Clifford, who did it," said the boy to the detective.

"Likely," assented the officer. "It's his way of working. I'll look the matter up."

He held a conference with his superior officer, and several men were sent out to look for the guilty parties, while Jack was detained to give his affidavit of what he heard and saw.

By noontime all the facts came in.

The cashier of the bank appeared and told how he had been forced to give the combination to the burglars, and swore that the thieves stole a large, japanned tin box containing over two millions of dollars worth of stocks, bonds and bank notes of high denomination from the safe.

Entrance to the cellar had been effected, as Jack explained; the vault was opened, and the safe inside was blown open with dynamite.

By three o'clock the watchman of the new building and Dan Clifford's pal were caught, but none of the booty, as they swore that when the robbery was committed Clifford fled in a cab with the tin box.

Rob Bunker set out to look for Clifford.

The news he brought in was discouraging in the extreme.

He tracked the burglar to the dock of an Australian line of steamers, learned that the rascal had taken passage aboard of the steamship Red Hawk for Sydney, and the vessel had left that morning.

As she was then at least three hundred miles away on the sea, and was booked to stop at several ports where the fugi-

tive burglar could disembark and escape, there was not much possibility in capturing him.

It is true but few vessels could overhaul that steamer," said Jack, with a frown, "and the case would be hopeless if it wasn't for the fact that I've got a craft all ready for departure now that can capture the steamer before she reaches her first port of destination."

"If you recover the treasure box," said the president of the robbed bank, who was present, "we will give you the money in it—fifty thousand dollars."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed Jack.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DRIFTING WRECK.

Every one was startled by Jack's remark, and the detective said:

"Do you mean to say that you can overhaul the steamer with your boat?"

"I am sure I can do it," replied the boy, in positive tones.

"Will you take Bunker with you?" asked the superintendent.

"I have no objection to doing so," was Jack's reply.

"Then prepare to accompany Mr. Wright," said the official.

"Where can I find your boat?" queried the detective.

Jack informed him, and Bunker said he would be aboard in an hour, whereupon the young inventor returned to the boat.

His friends were getting uneasy over his protracted absence, and we explained what had befallen him, arousing their most intense surprise and delight at the prospect of a trip.

The boat had worked down from Wrightstown with nothing wrong save the adjustment of some parts of the machinery, which was easily regulated, and she was well stocked now for a long trip, as the things had come aboard from the ship chandlers.

Jack sent a telegram to Wrightstown, stating that they might not return for an indefinite period of time, and in the stipulated length of time the central office detective boarded the boat.

Everything was then in readiness for departure, and the boy started off his boat, and she glided down the river past Governor's Island, ran across the bay, through the Narrows, and passing Fort Hamilton she sped out to sea.

The ocean had a dark, sullen look, for it was a gloomy night and the waves were rolling high.

Bunker became violently seasick for a few hours, as he was not accustomed to ocean traveling, but finally got over it and joined Jack in the pilot-house, for Tim and Fritz had turned in for the second watch.

The boy was speeding his boat now, for the hand on one of the registers indicated that they were going at a rate of fifty knots an hour.

"By jove! She's a regular race horse of the sea!" said the detective, as he observed at what a high rate of speed they were traveling.

"At any rate," said Jack, with a smile of satisfaction, "if the steamer is three hundred miles ahead, we will gain that distance in about six hours. She will make about eighteen knots, and we will be gaining thirty-two every hour after that, so that by some time to-morrow we ought to overtake her, if no accident happens."

"I hope so," said the detective sincerely, "for her first landing will be in Vera Cruz, when she crosses the Gulf of Mexico, and Dan Clifford could there go ashore and escape us."

Speaking in this strain, the two passed the time away until Tim and Fritz came in to relieve them, when they turned in.

The old sailor was an expert navigator, and generally acted as quartermaster, while the Dutch boy was an excellent cook, and took entire charge of the culinary department.

On the following morning all traces of the storm were left astern, and Fritz served up an excellent breakfast in the cabin.

"The Sleuth-Hound is an appropriate name for this boat," said Jack, as he strolled out on the starboard deck after breakfast with the detective. "When I named her, I little suspected that her first trip would be the pursuit of a criminal with a stolen treasure."

"You said she was a submarine boat, did you not?" asked the detective.

"I did. She can go under water as well as on the surface."

"Remarkable! I never knew that the secret of submarine navigation had been thoroughly mastered yet," said the detective.

"After a while I'll show you what she can do."

"Whereabouts do you imagine we are?"

"Between Cape Hatteras and Cape Fear."

"Off North Carolina?"

"Yes—ah! What's that ahead—a steamer?"

"Of course—see the smoke rising from her?"

"If that's the Red Hawk our race is nearly over."

"Can you run her down—she is going from us?"

"Yes; but I ain't sure yet that she's our prey."

They went into the pilot-house, where Fritz sat playing a lively tune on his accordeon, despite Tim's protests, angering and tantalizing the old salt, who dared not leave the wheel to stop him.

Assuming command of the wheel, Jack steered the Sleuth-Hound after the steamer, while Tim uttered a whoop, hopped toward Fritz, and just as he raised his wooden leg to smash the accordeon Bismarck flew up on his shoulder and grabbed him by the ear with its beak.

"Murder!" yelled the old sailor, as he stumped into the saloon.

"Sock it to him, Bismarck!" roared Fritz, with a grin, as he dashed after him.

The monkey got excited, and making a flying jump, he landed on the Dutch boy's head, buried its claws in Fritz's hair, and began to pull, when a roar of anguish pealed from the fat boy's lips, and a moment afterwards the four disappeared into the cabin.

"We are gaining on the steamer fast," commented Jack.

"Have you got a spy-glass?" eagerly asked the detective.

"Yes—in the rack on the wall behind you."

"Then I'll see if I can make out the steamer's name," and Bunker took the glass down and leveled it at the vessel ahead.

He studied the vessel for several minutes intently, and as the Sleuth-Hound drew closer to her he lowered the glass and exclaimed:

"It's the Red Hawk!"

"Good! In a few minutes we will reach her."

Jack now saw a number of passengers, sailors and officers on the seamer's deck, watching the submarine boat with glasses.

Faster flew the Sleuth-Hound, rapidly bearing down upon the big ocean liner, until but one mile separated the boats.

Tim and Fritz now came into the pilot-house, and the excitement among them ran high when they learned what was going on.

The distance soon narrowed down to half a mile, the submarine boat plowing her way into the broad white belt of foam the steamer left behind the width of her hull.

Jack became jubilant, for he now expected to board the vessel ahead, capture Dan Clifford, recover the box of treas-

ure, and return to New York with fifty thousand dollars in his pocket, easily earned.

But a moment later his cherished hopes were ruined.

There came a crash—a terrific jar—a roaring of waters ahead, and the Sleuth-Hound suddenly came to a pause.

"A collision!" gasped Jack.

The rest were violently flung to the floor, but as Jack had the wheel he managed to retain an upright position.

A scene of confusion followed.

Every one arose and began to ask questions.

With his usual quick wit, the young inventor stopped the wheel.

He glanced out of the window, but saw nothing floating on the water.

Whatever they had struck was buried under the sea, where the sharp prow of the Sleuth-Hound was submerged.

"Was it a rock?" gasped Bunker breathlessly.

"No, I think not. It was too yielding," replied Jack.

"Lord save us, lad, can't ye see it?" anxiously asked the sailor.

"Not a vestige. It's some floating object under water."

"How in dunder ve foundt dot out vot it vhas?" asked Fritz.

"Have to put on a diving suit and go under water," the boy replied.

Leaving the wheel in Tim's care, he went back into the storeroom chagrined over his unexpected interruption, and put on a diving suit made of a metal called aluminum, put together in scales, so that it was as flexible as an ordinary cloth suit.

There were three visors of thick glass in the helmet, covered with metal bars, and upon his back he strapped a metal box filled with compressed atmosphere, which supplied him by an automatic respiratory tube containing a valve, with air enough to last several hours.

Around his waist he wore a belt, in which he thrust a knife, and to his shoe soles he attached heavy enough weights to sink him.

On top of the steel air reservoir there was an encased electric battery, from which an insulated wire ran to a small but powerful electric light fastened on top of his helmet, worked by a thumbscrew on the belt.

Having supplied himself with a rope, he tied it around his body, and going up to the pilot-house he put the end of the line in the Dutch boy's hands, and they went out on deck.

Jack then climbed over the railing and let himself down upon the long, sharp prow of the boat, and slid under the boat into the water.

When he got half way out to the end of the prow he turned the thumbscrew in his belt and started the electric lamp.

It flashed a broad, brilliant glow through the water, and he saw a long, dark object submerged in the water ahead of him.

Continuing on until he reached it, he saw to his astonishment that it was the hulk of a dismantled ship, into the side of which the Sleuth-Hound had run her sharp prow, imbedding it to a depth of several feet, where it now held fast.

The boy clambered aboard the vessel and saw at a glance that she was laden with some lumber below her open hatches.

Part of her cargo had floated off, while just enough remained to buoy her up from sinking with the water that was in her.

It would be necessary to cut the Sleuth-Hound free, Jack saw, and in order to find out exactly how she was caught he went through the after hatchway, down the ladder into the hold.

A glance showed him that the prow of the Sleuth-Hound had burst into the shell of the boat, tore away some of the plating, and broken several ribs.

Having satisfied himself with the situation, Jack turned to retrace his steps, when the light of his lantern flashed upon an enormous fish rushing toward him with the speed of lightning.

It was a huge saw-fish.

CHAPTER V.

BENEATH THE OCEAN.

The monster rushing toward Jack was about eighteen feet long, with a body like a shark's, pavement-like teeth, and a remarkable elongation of the snout into a flat, bony sword, armed on each edge with twenty large hooked teeth.

Possessed of a vicious nature, herculean strength, and armed with a weapon which it can drive through a ship, the saw-fish was a foe to be feared by the boy, as he had only a knife with which to defend himself.

Seeing it coming full tilt, Jack dropped to the floor.

With a rush and a swish of the water, the monster shot over his head, and its saw, striking the ship's planks, was buried in the wood.

As quick as a flash, Jack drew his knife, and striding over to the saw-fish, he plunged the keen blade of the knife into its body several times, when a convulsion of pain darted through the fish, and it writhed its body so violently that the saw was torn free.

It shot off in a circle around the boy, and whizzed through the ship's hold, as if in an effort to find an opening big enough to escape through in the planks, and failing in this, it turned and charged upon the boy again in sheer madness.

This time Jack was more prepared for it.

In the rays of his electric lamp he saw its lurid eyes fastened upon him with a brilliant glare, the water magnifying them to an abnormal size that was startling.

"He knows I'm to blame for his wounds and means to fight," the boy muttered, as he kept a wary glance fastened on the fish.

It swam straight toward him a short distance, the other smaller fishes that swarmed there parting right and left before it in terror, and then, coming to a pause, it swam slowly around the boy, as if sizing him up on all sides.

The wounds he gave it were gaping and bleeding, and the pain from them seemed to go through the creature in twinges, as it occasionally writhed, squirmed and flew around and around, lashing the water with its tail and its saw.

Finally it came to a pause, and then made a dart at Jack with a suddenness and impetuosity that was overwhelming.

The boy jumped to get out of its way, but was too late to escape its terrible saw, for the point struck him square on the bosom, and he was knocked flying through the water, a dozen feet away.

For an instant he imagined the sharp click of the saw against his metal suit, that plainly reached his ears, was a signal that a hole had been burst through.

He ached dreadfully, and clapped his hand over the spot.

But to his joy and surprise he found that nothing was broken.

The saw-fish rebounded from the shock, the end of its weapon broken, and then was swimming at the extremity of the hold, only the faint outlines of its huge body showing.

Jack arose to his feet.

Glancing at his suit he saw that it was dented.

It was fortunate, indeed, that it had not been broken.

He had scarcely completed his survey when the fish came back at the side of the hold furthest removed from him.

"If it gets another crack at me like that," muttered the boy, "it may succeed in driving its saw through my armor."

Once more the monster swam for him, but this time its approach was more dubious and slow.

In the handle of Jack's knife there was a brass binding post, and the boy secured a wire to it that ran from his electric battery.

When this was done, he turned the current into the knife.

Instead of waiting for the fish to open the attack, Jack now hurried toward the monster, which showed signs of timidity, now that he took the lead in the fight, and it tried to swim off.

The boy seized hold of its saw before it got out of his reach, and grasping the large dorsal fin on its back with the other hand, he hauled himself aside of it as it fled along.

The fish spurted ahead, but it was weakening fast from the first wounds the boy dealt, and he now thrust his knife into it again.

With a spasmodic start, as the electric current flashed into it, the monster rushed ahead, and Jack was flung to the floor.

He hastily arose and discovered that his knife was gone, for it had been buried in the body of the monster, and the jerk it gave broke the electric wire, when it shot off with the knife.

Swaying the light of his lamp around, the boy just caught sight of the fish dashing upward through one of the hatches, when it disappeared from view.

"It's beaten!" grimly muttered the boy.

And so it was.

He climbed up the ladder, his rope trailing behind, and when he got on deck he signaled to Fritz to haul in on the rope.

Jack then got down upon the prow of the Sleuth-Hound and clambered up to the deck, assisted by the Dutch boy.

Here he recounted his adventure with the fish, and told his friends what was necessary in order to liberate the Sleuth-Hound.

"It will take several hours to get her free," he said, "and in the meantime the Red Hawk will gain a good many miles on us, so the sooner we get to work and save time the better it will be."

"Ach! Don't yer vant me to helb yer?" asked Fritz.

"Of course. Put on your diving suit. I can't do it alone."

Instructing Tim how to act while they were upon the wreck, Jack and the fat boy left the Sleuth-Hound and boarded the sunken vessel.

There they set to work at liberating the prow of the submarine boat, and found it to be a far more difficult task than they anticipated.

The shadows of the night fell on the sea before they finished cutting the Sleuth-Hound free, when Tim reversed the wheels and pulled her off.

During their operations many more of the logs with which the ship was laden drifted out of her, decreasing her buoyancy, and the moment the prow of the Sleuth-Hound recoiled she sank twenty feet, carrying Jack and Fritz down with her.

At first they imagined that she was sinking to the bottom, but the buoyancy of the logs within her still held her up, despite the weight of her ballast and the water that filled her.

The crew of the Sleuth-Hound did not know she sank, but after the lapse of half an hour it occurred to Tim that something was wrong, as Jack and Fritz had not returned.

Somewhat alarmed, the old sailor set the pumps in motion, and filling the air reservoirs, he closed up all the openings to the boat.

Then he operated another pump, which forced all the air from the central chamber in the hold into the two end compartments.

When this was done, he let enough water in the exhausted

space to balance the bulk of the air, and after that for every liquid pound of water he shipped, the boat descended a foot into the ocean.

By the weight of the water exceeding the bulk of the compressed air, he sank the boat gradually to a depth of thirty-two feet, then stopping the influx of water, she came to a pause on a level keel.

Under the water they lived on the air in the reservoirs, which was automatically injected into the living rooms, where it remained until it became vitiated from being breathed; when a valve at the top of the pilot-house exhausted it into the water.

Having stopped the descent of the boat, Tim pulled one of the levers on the switchboard, putting the searchlight into union with the electric battery, when an enormous shaft of dazzling light shot from the instrument on the roof to a great distance ahead.

The water within its rays was illumined as if by sunlight, and the brilliant beam attracted thousands of all sorts of deep sea fishes.

They swarmed around the boat inquisitively and glided along the glass front, within a few inches of the two inmates.

A cry of wonder escaped Rob Bunker at the curious scene that was now spread before his view, and a thrill of delight passed over him when he found that the sensation of navigating under water was not very much different than on the surface at that depth.

"Extraordinary!" he exclaimed, in astonished tones.

"Werry," admitted Tim. "Stand by an' watch now, my hearty."

"Are you going to start her?" queried Bunker, peering out of the window.

"Aye, aye! Got ter search fer them two lads."

Tim started the big propeller at the stern, and grasping the wheel he sent the Sleuth-Hound slowly ahead in a circle.

They were twelve feet below the wreck at that moment, and did not know it, and sent the boat far from the two boys, who then stood upon the deck of the vessel despairingly watching the Sleuth-Hound speeding away from them.

Unaware that they had left Jack and Fritz behind them, the old sailor searched around busily for some time, and not seeing any signs of them, he said:

"Dash me, if I ain't a-skeered they've sunk ter ther bottom on ther wreck."

"How deep is the ocean here?" questioned Bunker anxiously.

"Ther good Lord only knows."

"What can we do, then, Tim?"

"Do? Why, dive down, of course."

As the old sailor said this he took on more water and started the small perpendicular propellers at the stern, stopped the big one, and the bow of the Sleuth-Hound inclined itself at an angle, the acuteness of which was regulated according to the speed of the screws.

Down dove the boat at this angle thirty-two feet more, when the useless search was resumed, and she went down again, this time bent upon a trip to the bottom of the sea, if it did not exceed one hundred fathoms.

CHAPTER VI.

FAILURE OF THE PUMPS.

Tim kept his solitary eye fastened upon one of the gauges as the boat kept descending, and the detective watched out the window.

The color of the water became darker the further they descended, until it assumed a dense, brownish tint. Indeed, all light was excluded a little distance from the surface.

Fishes and aquatic animals strange to Bunker's eyes moved around the boat, and the water held in suspension various floating masses of weed, vegetation and spawn of fish.

Different kinds of plants floated their long, sinuous stems in an upright position with graceful curves and modulations with the ever-restless movements of the currents.

When one of the registers indicated a depth of two hundred feet, the detective suddenly announced that the bottom of the sea lay below them in plain sight, divided up into plains, valleys, hills, deserts of sand, immense deposits of mud, rolled stones and picturesque rocks.

Tim let the Sleuth-Hound descend to within ten feet of the bottom, and then brought her to a pause, reflecting the light around.

At this depth, although not much inconvenienced by the change of pressure, Tim and Bunker had a ringing in their ears, a slight headache and a feeling of oppression, while the extreme coldness of the water disseminated a chill through the boat.

Off on the port side they saw the skeleton ribs of what had once been a large ship, caught among a heap of rocks, covered with barnacles, slime and seaweed.

Ahead of them there was an animated forest of long, slim trees swaying with the current, and to the right a muddy plain.

The boat was started off on a cruise along the shell-bestrewn bottom, and a sharp lookout was maintained; but after an hour spent this way nothing was seen of the missing ones.

Both searchers became very anxious.

They had carefully searched all over without finding a trace of their friends, and the old sailor said, in despairing tones:

"Keelhaul me, if I think they are down here at all, Bunker."

"But where else can they be?" asked the detective blankly.

"I reckon as they're afloat on ther wreck abaft there."

"Very likely. I don't know what to suggest doing."

"We kin take one more turn over this sandy plain, then go up."

Accordingly Tim started the boat ahead in a large circle, in the meantime spinning one of his yarns, which took him about ten minutes to finish.

By this time the circuit was completed, and Tim started to pump the water from the chamber, when to their alarm they found that the machinery failed to act upon it.

The Sleuth-Hound remained as stationary as a stone.

"Blow me!" gasped Tim, his eye bulging. "Wot's this?"

"She don't rise," said Bunker in dismay.

"No. Thar must be something wrong down below, sir."

"Good heavens! I hope we ain't doomed to remain down here!"

"Blame me if it don't look like it."

"Do you understand the machinery?"

"Not werry good. Jack and Fritz is ther ones wot ginerally 'tends to it."

A blank look of horror began to settle over Bunker's face.

They were placed in a most perilous position, for if the trouble was not rectified there seemed no possibility of reaching the surface, as the detective was totally ignorant about every kind of machinery, and therefore incapable of doing anything to help them.

For a moment a blank silence ensued between them.

They stood staring at each other, not knowing what to do.

"Hadn't you better go down into the engine room and see if you can understand what the trouble is?" asked Bunker at last.

"Aye, that I can," dubiously replied Tim; "but I don't calkerlate as I kin do any good thar, my lad. You wait here."

The detective nodded, and Tim hobbled out.

He passed down into the engine room and turned up the lights.

The machinery of the Sleuth-Hound was totally unlike any other engine used for the same purpose.

It consisted of a number of huge tubes, in an upright position, between which ran a net of insulated electric wires that joined a series of enormous armatures, for the tubes were in the form of great horseshoe magnets, wound with wires.

Between them were a large number of shafts with cogged wheels, joined by endless chain belts, while at the end of the room there stood a series of shelves upon which sat numerous rubber jars of the storage type joined by wires to a large, light dynamo.

Tim stood staring at the complicated machinery in despair, for he could not, figuratively, make head nor tail of it.

"Shiver my figgerhead, if I kin understand it!" he muttered in disgust.

He laid his hand on one of the pipes to peer in among the wheels and examine them, when he received an electric shock that knocked him spinning across the room, yelling with alarm.

Picking himself up, he shook his fingers that yet tingled from the powerful current, and bolted upstairs.

"Well?" queried the detective anxiously.

"'Tain't no use. I can't do nuthin'!" growled Tim.

"By George, we can't stay down here forever!"

"I know we can't. Why don't you overhaul ther engine?"

"Because I know less than you do about it."

"Then wot's ter be did? It's two hundred feet ter ther top."

"Suppose one of us ascends? Maybe Jack is floating on the surface."

This bare possibility was certainly their only chance for salvation, so Tim agreed to make the venture, and prepared to go up.

He put on a diving suit, and secured a long rope to his body.

Bunker also donned a suit, heavily weighted, and they went up to the companionway on top, and entered a closet with water-tight doors.

Filling it with brine, they opened the outer door, and passed out on deck.

Tim cast off his weights, and his knapsack began to raise him upward.

Bunker held on to the line, and played it out slowly, as it was dangerous to ascend too suddenly from a heavy pressure to a lighter one.

Up, up, up went the old sailor gradually, until at last he faded from the detective's view in the watery realm above.

Bunker kept on letting out the line until suddenly it became slack, when he knew Tim needed no more.

CHAPTER VII.

GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

Left alone on the submerged wreck, Jack and Fritz had seen the Sleuth-Hound go down below the vessel to search for them, and a pang of dismay passed over the young inventor.

"They've missed us," he muttered, "and may go searching all over without finding the wreck. How unfortunate!"

He glanced at Fritz and made a motion to him.

They understood the deaf and dumb alphabet, and the boy resorted to it when he attracted his companions's attention and spelled:

"They don't see us, Fritz—shall we stay here?"

"Might as well for a while," spelled back the fat boy.
 "While we waste time here the Red Hawk is leaving us."
 "Can't help it. Timi will soon be back and find us."
 Jack was very easily assured of this, however.

He knew from experience that it was like searching for a needle in a haystack to attempt to find a man buried in the sea.

He paced restlessly up and down upon the deck of the vessel, and an hour dawdled slowly by.

Still no signs of the Sleuth-Hound were seen.

Fritz now made an alarming discovery, and told Jack of it.

"The lumber in this wreck is drifting out of the hole we cut in the side of the hull," he announced, "and the ship is slowly sinking."

"She will go to the bottom, then," replied Jack.

"Don't you notice how she is rolling now?"

"Yes. She seems to be topheavy, and is going to turn over."

"It is dangerous to remain here, then."

"Very, for if she goes down, her descending hulk will create a suction that is sure to drag us down with her."

"We had better leave her at once, Jack."

"Come on, then. Cast off your weights. Our knapsacks of air will safely float upon the surface of the sea."

This suggestion was carried out at once.

As soon as they abandoned their weights, they were swiftly borne upward, and their heads bobbed from the sea.

They had not acted any too promptly, for no sooner were they off the wreck when it turned completely over.

Her remaining cargo was quickly emptied through the open hatchways, and in an eddy she sank to the bottom.

The two boys now found themselves floating on the surface of the sea, upon which the big full moon was rising in the east.

The waves were rolling and choppy, dotted with white caps, and kept their bodies bobbing up and down like corks.

Unscrewing the front visors of their helmets, the two boys fell to conversing over their peculiar separation from their friends, and kept a keen lookout in all directions, expecting momentarily to see the Sleuth-Hound come up from the depths.

Half an hour passed by, when suddenly Fritz uttered a yell, and his body was sent floating six feet from Jack.

"Look oudt!" he yelled frantically.

"What's the matter?" queried the boy in surprise.

"Someding hit me. It vhas a shark, fer sure."

"Ah! And here it is!"

A large dark object shot up in the air between them.

The two boys swam off in opposite directions from it.

But a moment afterwards they were startled to hear:

"Hey! Haul to! It's me, Tim!"

And sure enough it was the old sailor.

While rising his helmet had come in contact with Fritz's legs.

"Donner vetter!" roared the Dutch boy delightedly. "It vhas de oldt liar!"

"By Jove! You scared us!" exclaimed Jack.

"Such a search as we've been a-havin' fer ye down below, an' all ther while here ye've been aloft on ther surface!" said Tim, who had opened the glass visor of his helmet as his friends had done.

"Where is the boat?" asked Jack.

"Sunk ter ther bottom, an' blame me if I kin raise her."

"Has anything gone wrong?"

"Aye. Ther blasted ole pumps won't empty the water outer her, an' me an' Bunker don't know wot ter do, so I've ventured to come up arter ye an' see if we ean't git ye down aboard o' her."

"How under heaven am I to do that? I haven't got weights

to sink my body," said Jack, "and the buoyant knapsack won't let me descend a foot without them."

"Don't yer git skeered about that, my lad," said Tim, with a grin. "I'll venture ter say as I kin fix ye up all right. A leetle incident like this once happened ter me when I wuz aboard o' ther ole——"

"For heaven's sake, don't spring any of your yarns on us now!" roared Jack. "We've got work of too serious a nature to attend to."

"It'll keep a while," grinned Tim.

"How can you get me down to the boat?"

"By ther use o' this towin' line," said Tim, unfastening the rope from about his body and securing it around Jack. "I've left the other end in Bunker's flippers, an' he's a-standing on ther deck o' ther boat. If yer ready I'll signal him ter haul ye down."

"Good! Tim, I admire your ingeniousness," said the young inventor.

He fastened up his visor, after telling them to remain where they were till he returned, and Tim signaled to the detective by pulling twice on the rope, when he and the detective passed inside and took off their suits.

Bunker's amazement knew no bounds when he saw that he had pulled Jack down instead of the old sailor, and when they had exchanged stories of their experiences the boy went down into the engine room to learn the cause of the trouble.

In returning to the boat Jack and the detective remained in the water compartment with the doors shut until an engine, which they put in motion by pressing a button on the wall, emptied the place.

The young inventor made a critical examination of everything, and finally discovered that the reason the pump did not empty the Sleuth-Hound, was because its gear had not been put into communication with the machinery.

Jack rectified the trouble, and starting the pumps, emptied the boat, and she gradually arose to the surface.

Here Tim and Fritz were picked up, and the Sleuth-Hound went on in pursuit of the Red Hawk, her prow uninjured by the collision with the sunken wreck, and her crew none the worse for their adventure.

The next day dawned very ugly, and a storm arose before they came in sight of the steamer they were pursuing.

Jack submerged the boat to her decks when the gale broke, and she rode better that way, and went swiftly ahead.

At first the storm was moderate, but when night came it grew stronger and fiercer, and buffeted the Sleuth-Hound about like a mere cockle-shell.

They passed Florida and swung off to the westward in the gale and went into the stormy Gulf of Mexico.

Several vessels were passed, but none of them was the one they were so eagerly searching for.

All that night and the following day the storm raged furiously, and as the boy found it hard to manage the boat upon the surface, he submerged her to a depth where the influence of the waves was not felt so much, and they continued on slowly in comparative quietness.

Jack was heading her straight for Vera Cruz, for he knew that the steamer would make that port her first stopping place, and he designed to cut her off ere reaching it.

The Sleuth-Hound rapidly overhauled the steamer, and passed her while under the water, and when she came in sight of the Mexican coast, the storm had blown itself out, and she arose.

It was a clear, calm, hot morning, and the submarine boat cruised about all day, her crew keeping a sharp lookout.

Night fell upon the gulf, moonlit and starry, and the hour of ten had just passed when Fritz descried two steamers approaching.

One of them was towing the other, the shaft of which had

been broken during the storm, and as they drew nearer the young inventor saw that the disabled vessel was the Red Hawk.

He apprised his friends, and they ran the Sleuth-Hound up to the injured steamer, and Jack made his way aboard and met the captain.

"I am here, sir," said the boy, "to find a passenger you carried from New York, of the name of Dan Clifford."

"The gentleman you seek is not aboard," replied the captain.

"Not aboard!" echoed the boy in amazement.

"We met with an accident. Fearing shipwreck, a number of my passengers boarded a vessel that came to our aid. It was the ship Rapid Transit, from New Orleans to Belize, in Honduras, and among those who boarded her was Mr. Clifford."

"And the ship?"

"Is now on his way to Central America."

Jack asked the captain for a description of Clifford, and it tallied so exactly with the fugitive that there could be no doubt he was identical.

After learning how the other steamer picked the Red Hawk up to tow her to Vera Cruz for salvage, and thanking the captain, Jack returned aboard his own vessel and explained what he had learned to his friends.

They were all deeply disappointed.

Still, as it was a sailing vessel Clifford had transferred to, they expected to overhaul it in a short time, and started off.

The Rapid Transit had two days' start of them, but with the determination to capture the fugitive Jack did not despair, but sent his boat flying along at full speed in pursuit of the Rapid Transit.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOSS OF THE TREASURE.

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away, Tim?"

"Two p'int's off our weather beam."

"What do you make her out to be?"

"A full-rigged clipper ship under full sail."

"Can you distinguish her name?"

"Aye, ther fog puzzled me, but I sees it's ther Rapid Transit."

"Thunder! The New Orleans vessel, bound for Belize, which the captain of the steamer Red Hawk told me of two days ago, in the gulf."

When this dialogue went on the Sleuth-Hound was forging through a dense fog somewhere—Jack did not know the exact location—on the coast of Honduras between Cape Catoche and Ambergris Cay.

She had run into the fog bank early that morning.

The boy peered out of the window, and now saw a large, majestic ship emerging from the mist like a gigantic sea ghost.

Steering the Sleuth-Hound toward her Tim ran alongside.

"Ship ahoy!" hailed Jack, going out on deck with Bunker.

"Ahoy!" cried the lookout in the bow.

"Haul to! I want to board your craft!"

"What for?"

"On important business."

The Sleuth-Hound ran alongside near the bow, and one of the crew dropped down an accommodation ladder, which Jack seized.

Up on the deck, peering over the bulwarks, were a number of the passengers who had been transferred from the steamer

Red Hawk, and among them the boy noticed the fugitive bank burglar.

Dan Clifford saw him at the same moment and suddenly realizing what was about to transpire, he vanished from view.

The boy hastened to climb up the ladder, followed by the officer, and upon reaching the deck was accosted by the captain with:

"Well, what's wanted now, gentlemen?"

"I have a warrant for the arrest of one of your passengers named Dan Clifford, whom you took from the steamer Red Hawk," replied the boy. "I just saw him among your passengers, sir, and with your permission I will take him into custody, sir."

"You amaze me! What has that man done?"

"He is a noted bank burglar and he broke into the vaults of the D— Bank in New York, stole a box of money and bonds amounting to two millions, and is trying to escape to a foreign land in order to escape arrest for his crime."

"Astonishing! Astonishing! I did not dream that the man was so desperate a rascal as that, but I never liked his looks," said the captain, "and if you want him, I will be glad to get rid of such an unwelcome passenger. He occupies stateroom No. 3."

Jack was delighted at the captain's agreeable manner and turning to the detective, he asked him:

"Do you see the rascal, Bunker?"

"No. He has vanished," replied the detective, who had been keenly scanning every one on the deck. "He has taken alarm."

"The man went below when you appeared, sir," said a passenger.

"Very likely he is hiding himself," said Jack.

He and the detective hastened to the companionway leading down between decks to search for the thief, when up the stairs came the fugitive suddenly, just in front of them.

In one hand he held the tin box and in the other a revolver, which he aimed at Jack as soon as he saw him.

"Back!" he yelled in savage tones. "Don't yer try none o' yer games on me, young feller, or I'll bore yer."

"Hold on there, Dan," the detective interposed. "We will make it worse for you if you pull the trigger."

"I ain't allowin' yer ter take me, Bunker—d'yer see?"

"Well, we will and you cannot avoid it now."

While speaking, the burglar had been edging toward the bulwarks, upon observing which, Jack dashed toward him, shouting:

"Give me that box!"

"Never!" hissed the rascal, recoiling.

"You will pay for it, then!"

"Stay where yer are, or I will fire!"

"Fire and be hanged to you!" cried Jack.

He fearlessly kept on and just as the burglar was going to pull the trigger, he lunged forward, and knocking the weapon aside, he caused the bullet to go far wide of the mark.

Before the thief could recover the use of it, Jack sent the pistol flying to the deck and seized the thief by the throat.

"Bunker, help me!" he shouted.

The detective rushed toward him, and the burglar, finding his arms hampered with the tin box, tore himself free of Jack's hand and, rushing to the bulwarks, he raised the treasure above his head and, panting for breath, he shouted:

"If yer move, I will balk yer by pitchin' it into the sea."

A cry of alarm escaped Jack.

He came to a sudden pause.

But the detective kept straight ahead.

Upon seeing that Bunker doubted him, the burglar hurled the box out far into the water and it struck with a splash.

Everyone was startled and cried out:

Taking advantage of their momentary surprise, Dan Clifford vaulted over the bulwark and fell to the water below.

Bunker ran to the side and peered over.

There were no signs of the burglar to be seen, however.

In toward the shore Jack observed a dim red light glowing through the mist on a rocky headland, and heard a prolonged mournful sound, very much like a buoy whistle.

But the fog was so dense he could not distinguish anything, and as he joined the detective he exclaimed:

"The treasure is gone, Bunker."

"Yes; I saw it strike the sea and sink."

"Is Clifford in the water there?"

"I can't see him. The fog hides his body."

"What in thunder are we to do now I'd like to know?"

"Well, it's likely he'll swim ashore here."

"No doubt. But how are we to recover the treasure under the sea? There is nothing to mark the spot where it went down."

"Hang me if I know, Wright."

"To track that under-water treasure will be a fearful task."

"It you don't do it, you won't get your reward."

The ship had been forging ahead while they were speaking, and the scene of the escape was swallowed up in the fog astern.

Jack and the detective answered the captain's questions about the matter, and hastily returning to the Sleuth-Hound, cast her loose.

Hurrying into the pilot-house, the boy steered his boat back toward the place where he judged that Clifford had gone overboard.

The only indication he had of the place was to get where he could hear the mournful buoy whistle, and when this was done they searched for the dull, red light they had seen.

It was impossible to find it, however, as it was extinguished.

Bringing the boat to a pause about as near to the place as he could locate where Clifford flung the treasure box overboard, Jack had the anchor heaved.

It was utterly impossible in the dense fog then prevailing to form an accurate estimate of the right spot, but satisfying himself he was as near to it as he could get, Jack exclaimed:

"We can do no better than this. I'll buoy the place so we can find it again if we have to depart."

"If you do," said Bunker, "I wish you would set me ashore as soon as possible so I can start on a hunt for the burglar, as it is likely enough that he swam to the land, and must now be somewhere high and dry on this coast."

"All right," replied Jack. "I'll soon have my buoy ready."

He took an empty water keg, and making it water-tight, he secured a long wire cable to it, with a grapnel on the end.

Dropping the anchor over and allowing the keg to float, he soon found that it held fast to that spot.

Then he started the Sleuth-Hound slowly and cautiously shoreward, with Tim in the bow on the lookout for rocks and shoals.

Within a few moments a dark outline of the shore loomed up through the fog bank, and Tim shouted:

"Luff up! Breakers ahead!"

"How far off?" queried Jack, stopping the boat.

"Not more'n fifty yards," replied Tim.

"Fritz, get out the portable skiff, and row Bunker ashore."

"Yah!" replied the Dutch boy, hastening away.

In a few minutes the boat was put together, lowered into the water, and Fritz and the detective embarked after Jack and Bunker had arranged a plan of action.

"Give way," said Bunker, when he was ready.

"Hully gee!" shouted Tim. "Look ashore there!"

He pointed at the base of the cliffs lining the coast, and the detective glanced up and uttered a cry.

For on shore they saw Dan Clifford hurrying along.

The thief saw them, paused a moment, shook his fist at them, and then speeding away he was soon lost to view in the fog.

"Row like thunder!" cried Bunker. "If you put me ashore in time, Fritz, I may overtake the scoundrel."

The Dutch boy rowed with all his might. They passed through the surf, and he presently set the detective ashore.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SEARCH BEGINS.

Fritz left the detective on shore running after the fugitive, and rowing back to the Sleuth-Hound he went aboard.

"He vent after dot tief," said the Dutch boy, as he stowed away the portable boat, "und say dot he don't vhas come back until he got him. Id vhas so sure as nefer vhas dot he got a hard shob."

"We will remain here in the meantime, then," said Jack, "and search for the treasure. I'll begin operations as soon as the fog lifts."

"When I wuz in ther navy," said Tim, "I wuz one o' ther best swimmers aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash, an' one day as we rode at anchor——"

"Ach, gief us a rest vonct," growled Fritz, walking away.

"Ther commander," continued Tim, unabashed, as he directed his lonesome eye upon Jack, "had a valuable diamond ring, an' it fell overboard——"

"Another of your confounded yarns!" exclaimed Jack, following Fritz.

"It went down in twenty feet o' water," said Tim, in no way disconcerted, as he addressed his remarks to the parrot, who sat perched on the rail, looking at him with a sad expression, "an' I dove over arter it. In them days I had both eyes an' both legs, an' worked 'em ter great advantage——"

"Bismarck, come here alretty!" yelled Fritz, from within the pilot-house.

"Hurrah for me!" croaked the parrot, and he flew away.

"Down in ther water I went," proceeded Tim, with a sickly grin, as he swooped down on Whiskers and caught him by the neck, "an' keepin' my deadlights wide open, I seen ther ring a-sparklin' an' grabbed it."

"Wow-wee!" shrieked the monkey, struggling to get away.

"Keep still, dash yer ugly mug!" roared Tim. "I'll make some un hear this story if I bust. As soon as I got ther ring up I rose, an'——"

But just then the monkey got mad and bit Tim's finger, when the old sailor uttered a whoop, pranced around the deck, released Whiskers, and the howling little rascal scampered away at the top of his speed.

Tim sucked his finger, and gazed dolefully around.

"'Ter be continered in our next,' as they says in ther story papers," he growled, and with a dissatisfied look he stumped away.

It was late in the afternoon before the fog cleared away and gave our friends a view of the shore panorama.

Jack saw that they were anchored near the buoy, which floated within half a mile of the coast.

It was a rugged shore, great limestone cliffs towering up straight ahead of the boat, while up the coast a forest edged the water, and down the shore there was a marshy jungle overhung by a mist laden with the deadly miasma.

It was an uneven seaside, for there were numerous streams.

lagoons, promontories and bays breaking the monotony, and within a short distance of the boat numerous small isles or keys dotted the surface of the Gulf of Honduras.

The boy eagerly scanned the cliffs in quest of the dull red light he had seen during the fog as they were passing by, but it was invisible.

"We have no clew to guide us to the location of the tin box, boys," he remarked, "so we will have to search at random for it."

"Are yer a-goin' down now?" queried Tim.

"We may as well begin as to remain idling here."

"Eferyting vhas retty now," said Fritz.

"Then close the pilot-house windows," said the boy.

Fritz did so, and the young inventor sunk the boat.

She went down gradually, and the searchlight and incandescent lamps were started, and shed a mellow glow all around the boat.

"Down, down the Sleuth-Hound settled slowly but surely, and they did not see bottom until the register marked fifty feet.

She landed in a bed of soft sand, and as the boy stopped her pumps, and flashed the light around, they observed a curious scene.

The bottom of the sea looked like a cemetery.

Those tiny creatures, called polypi, that make the coral reefs and are said to have built Yucatan, had raised thousands of coral mounds all over this place, and these strange monuments, rising white and solitary all around the boat, lent a singular aspect to the scene.

Curious ribbons of wavy, dark-green vegetation floated up from the network of tangled and fine roots, huge masses of sea cabbages opened their bulbs upon the carpet of sand, springs of fresh water gushed from the ground in countless bubbles, and myriads of fish flashed here and there like will-o'-the-wisps.

Jack lifted the boat a few feet from the surface of the ground and slanted the rays of the searchlight upon the sea's bottom.

Then he started the Sleuth-Hound upon the track of the treasure, with Tim and Fritz on watch at the pilot-house windows.

The boat glided ahead through the dense element, slowly enough to give them a good view of the bottom, and they ran into a jungle of thick eel grass, which the currents kept restlessly moving.

"If the box fell in among such a jungle as this," said the boy, "we shall never find it, unless by accident."

"Yah! I tink so neider," assented Fritz gloomily.

"Ther jungle ain't werry big, fer thar's ther other side now," said Tim.

He pointed ahead, and the boat glided from among the waving blades over a lumpy space, from which miniature coral reefs in profusion projected, among which they wound in and out, the boy keeping his boat going in a large circle.

From this point onward they had an uninterrupted view of the bottom, and observed schools of fish swarming around them in large numbers, attracted by the electric lights.

The number of these inquisitive creatures kept increasing so rapidly that in a short space of time there were so many thousands crowding around the boat that Tim and Fritz could not see the bottom.

It seemed as if there were nothing outside the plate glass windows but a compact body of moving fish of all sizes, kinds and shapes, and they proved to be so troublesome that the young inventor was finally obliged to stop the boat.

"We can't go on this way," he remarked, with a frown. "You can't see a thing ahead. We must get rid of them somehow."

"Vhy yer don't a eleedrics shock gief dem?" asked Fritz.

"Just the plan," eagerly assented the boy.

He put the battery into communication with the hull of the boat by means of a wire, and turned on a heavy current.

The water was a good conductor of electricity, and readily took the charge and transmitted it to the fishes nearest to the boat ere the strength of the shock was exhausted by expanding.

No sooner had the fish felt it when a terrific commotion began among them, and they shot away in all directions.

Within a remarkably short space of time the immediate vicinage of the Sleuth-Hound was cleared of the pests, and she was enabled to go on again with perfect freedom.

It is a curious fact that fishes are very wary and cautious, and usually require only one lesson to take heed of danger, and this trait of character acted like a charm in this instance.

They kept at a respectful distance from the boat now, and the search was resumed under less difficulties.

The submarine boat now came to a place where a natural hollow had formed in the bottom of the sea, and down in this basin the boy saw a heap of driftwood, thoroughly water-logged, eddying around with the current that bored out the hollow.

Crossing this depression, the Sleuth-Hound ran into a forest of tangled vines that floated up from the bottom, writhing and squirming like a mass of great water-snakes.

The razor-like prow of the boat gashed its way through them like a battering ram, tearing them apart, and she came out the other side with the torn particles clinging to her.

Brushing ahead through the water washed them off, however, and she ran over a sandy plateau, the boy winding her in on the circle she had begun to form until she finally reached the axis.

Nothing was seen of the treasure box.

This experiment was repeated over and over again.

All night long the three friends worked tirelessly around the buoy within a radius of half a mile in every direction, until the boat drew so close to the shore as to run in shoal water.

Still they did not find what they sought for.

Daylight came, and they breakfasted.

Each one had caught a few hours' sleep, and when the morning meal was finished they resumed their work.

At this time they started again, the tide running very swiftly where they began, and they were in shoal water near the shore.

To Jack's amazement he suddenly found that the boat was caught in a terrific submarine current that swept them in toward the land, and he reversed his levers to back away, when there sounded a sudden report back in the engine room, and the propeller came to a sudden pause.

"Something has broken!" exclaimed the startled boy.

"Let me take the wheel," said Tim. "You kin go an' see wot it is."

The boy resigned the management of the boat to his old friend, and hastening down into the engine room, he saw that the big wire which conducted the electric force to the propellers had parted.

He hurriedly secured a piece of copper wire and repaired it.

All this work occupied several minutes, and he hastened back to the pilot-house, when he saw that the boat had been pulled into a large tunnel, and was just then emerging into a huge cavern under the land, into which the tunnel water poured.

Before the boy could say a word the boat struck upon a mass of rock and sand with a terrific shock and paused.

The three inmates of the pilot-house were hurled to the floor by the force of the shock.

CHAPTER X.

THE MAYAS.

When the young inventor and his friends recovered themselves, they peered out the pilot-house windows, and were amazed to find that the cavern they were in had been made by the hand of man.

After a few minutes' consideration, however, Jack understood the matter, and turning to his friends, he said:

"We have run upon a sand-bar."

"Aye, an' no show ter git off till ther tide rises," said Tim.

"Don't yer vhas nodices dot dis cafe vhas not a natural one?"

"It was made by the Mayas," said Jack.

"Ther Mayas?" queried Tim, in puzzled tones. "Wot's them?"

"A powerful tribe who made Yucatan the seat of an empire and the home of a flourishing civilization in times gone by," said the young inventor. "They rivaled the grandeur of the Peruvian Incas, and the Aztecs on the Anahuac plateau. I have heard that although the Maya nation was vigorous enough to resist the conquistadores, the reduction of this barren country cost the lives of more Spaniards than had been expended in wresting from the Incas and the Montezumas, the wealthiest empires of this hemisphere."

"I don't see how many o' ther lubbers could live on sich a bleak, wild an' almost streamless land as Yucatan is," said Tim.

"The absence of rivers," replied Jack, "isn't owing as much to the absence of rain as it is to the porous nature of the soil, which absorbs water like a sponge, and thus prevents the development of streams. Beneath the surface, however, the waters accumulate so that the Mayas sunk wells for it. We must now be in what they call an aguada, or artificial underground lake, or reservoir. It has very likely worn the tunnel through, by which we entered, emptying itself into the sea, and now the tides come in and go out of the place."

The bottom of the aguada was paved with stones laid in cement, and the one they were in was far below the surface of the ground.

The walls were seen by the searchlight to be overgrown with vegetation, yet our friends could see beneath it the most beautiful sculptured facades, with niches holding the most exquisite carved statues.

When the tide arose high enough to float the boat off the sand-bar, Jack sent her further into the strange cavern, and when they reached the middle of it they came upon a small island.

Rising up from the center of it there was a huge pyramid with an immense flight of steps, surmounted by thirty-six pillars fully four feet square and sixteen feet high, disposed in three parallel rows ten feet apart, supported by a strangely carved stone platform.

On top of these pillars was a second platform, upon which rested a colossal head twenty feet high, of hideous aspect, and built of rough stones coated with mortar.

With his curiosity excited by this strange relic of ancient barbarism, Jack brought the boat to a pause at the shore of the isle, and leaving the Sleuth-Hound in Tim's care, he armed himself and went ashore.

The old sailor was instructed to light Jack's way with the searchlight, and as he kept it playing upon the boy wherever he went, the young inventor was enabled to see the stairs easily.

He went to the top of the pyramid and glanced around, when he saw that the columns were embellished profusely with rich friezes, reliefs and filigree work, while there was a

row of colossal heads on them, divided in panels, filled alternately with grecques in high relief.

There were inscriptions of hieroglyphics upon them, and as the boy stooped over to try and decipher them, he heard a soft footfall.

It was close behind, and he suddenly wheeled around.

As he did so he saw a head protruding from behind each of the pillars, while one individual had advanced into full view.

These men were pure Mayas.

They had coarse, black, straight hair, arched noses and reddish complexion, while their attire was very scanty.

There was a revolt in Yucatan in 1846 among the natives, and the rebellion was not entirely suppressed, and many of the people, withdrawing toward the coast lands beyond the Sierra Alta, had hitherto defied all efforts of the authorities to reduce them.

Such were the people Jack saw.

The boy was very much startled to see the natives there, for he knew what a lawless crew the Mayas were, looking upon every one outside of their tribe as enemies, and he therefore expected trouble.

"Hello! How now, strangers?" the boy exclaimed, in Spanish, for the population of Yucatan was made up of Mestizo and Spanish stock, and a corrupt Castilian was the universal language.

"What brings you here?" replied the man who stood exposed, in surly tones, and with the most suspicious looks at Jack.

"Purely an accident," replied the boy.

"You lie! It was to spy upon our tribe for the Mexicans."

"Don't get rude in your speech," said Jack angrily. "I have told the truth."

"But we do not trust you," said the dark fellow.

"I really don't care whether you do or not, to tell the truth."

"You soon will. Consider yourself our prisoner."

"Bosh! I don't consider anything of the sort!"

"Resist, and my men will fire upon you!"

"And I will return their shots with interest."

The Maya boldly strode up to Jack, a gleaming knife clutched point downward in his hand, and caught him by the throat.

Jack promptly hauled off and dealt him a punch between the eyes, and a yell of pain and fury escaped him as he reeled back.

"Keep your hands off me!" said the boy.

He retreated toward the stairs, for he saw that the odds were against him, as the men who had been concealed behind the pillars now sprang into view.

The man who had attacked Jack recovered himself and rushed for the boy, grasped him again, and was about to plunge the knife into him, when, by a dexterous blow the young inventor knocked it out of his hand.

A moment afterward they grappled each other, and a brief but terrible struggle began between them.

Jack was rendered desperate.

He forced his adversary back and tripped him.

Down he fell with a bang, and giving him a shove, Jack sent him tumbling down the pyramid stairs toward the underground lake.

He had just time to wheel around, raise his pistol and fire at the rest as they made a rush for him.

His shots brought them to a pause.

Retreating down the stairs, just as they hurriedly sought shelter behind the columns again, the boy bade fair to escape, when, to his surprise and alarm, the searchlight suddenly went out.

The pyramid was wrapped in dense gloom.

Jack could not see which way to go now.

"Something must have happened to the battery!" he muttered.

Down the stairs he crept rapidly, listening in the meantime for his enemies, and he soon heard the soft patter of their footsteps in pursuit of him in the gloom.

These sounds rapidly drew nearer, and the boy realized that in one moment more the whole crowd would reach him.

He got over to the side of the stairs, and felt of the smooth surface of the pyramid, to find some projection out on which he could go to let them pass him.

In some places there were interstices in the masonry where the mortar had fallen out, into which he could lodge his feet, and he quietly crept off from the stairs and clung to the face of the pyramid.

There he remained, straining his ears to catch the sound of his enemies passing, and soon heard the soft, stealthy patter as they went by and continued on to the bottom.

"I'm in a fix now!" the boy muttered. "Can't see a thing, and can't go down, or they'll catch me. If Tim sends the searchlight up here they'll see me. I'd be helpless hanging here, and would fall an easy victim to them!"

He made his way back to the stairs, satisfied that the Mayas had gone on to the bottom of the pyramid.

He now had no recourse but to ascend to the top, and although he listened intently he could hear nothing of the Mayas below.

His friends must have known by the shouts and pistol shots that he was in trouble, and he wondered why no one came to his aid.

This thought had scarcely entered his mind when he heard a terrific commotion down at the foot of the stairs in the gloom.

It was made up of yells, pistol shots and savage expletives.

The row continued for fully five minutes.

Some one then came rushing up the stairs.

Jack heard the fearful cries of the natives approaching, and groped his way back among the pillars.

"They are coming up again," he muttered desperately, "and they are sure to find me now and place me at a disadvantage."

Ensconcing himself behind one of the stone columns, the boy waited and listened, when he heard some one come rushing straight toward him, and a moment later the stranger struck him.

In a moment they grappled and struggled.

The young inventor was the best athlete of the two, and finally managed to get his adversary down on his back.

He got on top of him, and pressed his pistol against the vanquished fellow's head to put an end to him, when his victim uttered a low cry of despair, and gasped:

"Shiminey Christmas! I vhas a det pody!"

"Fritz!" exclaimed Jack, thrilled at nearly killing his friend in the dark.

"Holy Moses! It vhas Shack!"

"Aye, and here's the natives back! Get up, quick!"

A dozen torches now blazed up in the hands of the Mayas and shed a dull glare over the singular scene.

The natives stood at the head of the stairs.

Both boys arose, and grasping their pistols in their hands prepared themselves for a fight for their lives.

Hearing the stumping of the old sailor's wooden peg, the natives glanced around, and were about to hurl their spears at him, when Tim let a hand grenade fly into their midst.

It burst with a terrific report, and several of the Mayas fell.

A chorus of wild cries pealed from the lips of the remainder, and they fled toward the columns, when Jack and Fritz fired at them.

Several more bombs flew from Tim's hands, and a scene of confusion ensued, during which the old sailor yelled:

"Heave along, lads, an' git back ter ther Sleuth-Hound afore they recovers an' comes back arter us!"

"Go on. We will follow!" cried Jack.

"Ain't yer goin' ter chase dem?" growled Fritz angrily.

"No. There's no good to be gained fighting them. Come on."

With a grunt of disgust the fat boy followed Jack and Tim down to the water's edge, and there they found the boat.

Boarding her, they went inside, when the boy drove her out in the lake and asked Tim, as he brought her to a pause:

"What made the lights go out?"

"Keel haul me if I know," responded Tim. "We couldn't find nuthin' ther matter wi' ther searchlight, though Fritz examined it."

The boy lit a lantern and made a critical examination, when he found that the electric lighting wire had become crossed over one of the water tubes, and was discharging its current into the sea.

As soon as the wire was insulated the lights blazed up again, and the rays of the searchlight falling upon the adjacent wall, showed the boy a huge door, made of heavy timbers spiked together, that covered a passage leading to the upper ground.

There were half a dozen canoes in the water filled with Mayas, who had come through the passage and were paddling out to the pyramid.

"If we remain here much longer," said the boy, "we may have a battle with those fellows, from which absolutely nothing can be gained, so I think we had better return to the sea."

"Wot's our course back ter ther hole in ther ground?" asked Tim.

"The rising tide has hidden it underneath the water," replied Jack. "But where you see that ruffle on the surface lies the sand-bar upon which we ran. Our course lies straight in back of it."

"Den ve got ter sunk dot poats alretty?" said Fritz.

"There is no other way now of getting back into the passage."

Tim steered the Sleuth-Hound according to these directions, and when she reached the wall of the cavern he started the pumps and sunk her.

Down she went under the subterranean lake, and the searchlight showed them the water-worn tunnel, into which the rising tide was then pouring, filling the cavern.

Directing the boat into the opening, Tim drove her along, and she passed out into the depths of the sea again.

The search for the under-water treasure was then resumed, but they found no traces of it, and night fell on the sea.

Jack pointed out the window after supper, and remarked:

"It must be raining on the surface."

"Vhy you tink so?" queried the Dutch boy.

"Don't you see that most of the fishes have ascended surfaceward?"

"Fer sure. I didn't vhas notice dot. You vhas go ub also?"

"I want to see if there is any sign of Bunker's return."

CHAPTER XI.

THE RED LIGHT.

The young inventor was just about to give the word to fire, when he suddenly observed Tim coming up the stairs.

The Sleuth-Hound arose to the surface, and true to Jack's prediction they found that it was raining hard.

A most intense darkness prevailed.

Some distance away they saw the dim shore line in the gloom, and as the boy cast his glance upward he saw a dull red glow.

It was the same mysterious light he had seen at the time the thief flung the box of stolen money overboard.

Jack clutched Tim's arm excitedly, pointed at the light, and cried:

"By Jove! Look there! The beacon we have been searching for, Tim."

"Aye, lad, an' as true as Gospel I hear the fog whistle, too!"

"Steer the boat for it, old fellow. The moment we are directly in line with the light we will have the location of the treasure."

Tim sent the submarine boat flying along the coast in the direction of the light, and she rounded a rocky headland and came abreast of an indentation in the cliffs.

Within this sheltered nook our friends observed myriads of twinkling lights, showing that a settlement of some kind was nestling there at the base of the crags on the seashore.

The red glowing light and the wonderful whistle were quite near now.

The former was now seen to be a huge reflecting lantern swinging from the end of a rope, that was let down from the cliff top, while the whistle came from a large buoy bobbing up and down in the water at the base of the light.

The beacon would ordinarily have led to the presumption that it hung in a safe harbor at a masthead, while the buoy seemed to mark it a dangerous spot.

But in truth it was a false beacon, set, no doubt, to lure any storm-tossed craft upon the shore, while the buoy, instead of marking a danger spot, marked a clear channel to the shore.

Jack found this out as soon as he passed the buoy, and found the reefs beyond it, upon the jagged tops of which any ship could easily run in the gloom and become wrecked.

But little thinking gave the boy a fair estimate of the situation.

"That settlement is composed of coast wreckers!" he exclaimed.

"Ach! Dey lief on der wrecks dey lure to dot beaches, den?"

"Exactly. Such an inhuman practice ought never be permitted to exist, and if I had my way I'd exterminate the unholy herd."

"If yer gimme ther use o' a gun I'll start 'em up," said Tim.

"A shot at the false beacon would not come amiss," the boy replied; "but first let us buoy this place, so that we may be able to locate the treasure box. Fritz, get a keg, a rope and a grapnel."

The Dutch boy complied, and within a few minutes they had the locality marked and were ready for business.

But before they could proceed with the destruction of the lantern they suddenly were startled by hearing a distant chorus of yells coming from the coast settlement.

Then there sounded a wild, appealing voice, shrieking:

"Help! Help!"

"Some one in distress!" exclaimed Jack.

"Ach, gracious! Don't dot voice vhas familiar?" queried Fritz.

They listened intently again.

"Kill him!"

"There he goes!"

"Now—fire together!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

These words and the reports of pistols reached Jack's ears.

"Murder!" screamed the familiar voice again.

"It's Rob Bunker, the detective!" ejaculated Jack.

"Shust vot I tink," coincided the fat boy.

"I'll steer the searchlight on 'em!" exclaimed Tim, excitedly.

And in another instant the glaring sheet of light shot over the water upon the settlement, and lit up the place where it fell with the vividness of a shaft of the sun's rays.

The light fell upon a ruined city.

It was one of the seventy-two discovered in Yucatan, which had formerly been a home of the Maya nation.

But this place was now inhabited by white men.

This relic of bygone days was known as Mayapan.

It was in ruins at the time of the conquest, having been overthrown during a general revolt of the feudatory states a century before.

These ruins, overgrown with vegetation, covered considerable space, the magnitude of its decaying buildings, the richness of its sculptured facades, and the almost classical beauty of its statuary being wonderful.

Many of the houses were now inhabited. There were a number of small ships lining the shore, and the streets were thronged with people.

They were clad in picturesque costumes, had chased Bunker through the streets, and he had taken refuge on top of a huge mound, from whence he was menacing the crowd below with a brace of pistols.

Every one of the inhabitants were armed and yelling at him.

The Sleuth-Hound was so close to the shore now that Jack could distinguish the people's features, and what was his amazement to see that the leader of the crowd was Dan Clifford.

It was evident that the detective had tracked the rascal into the village, and as the settlers had taken sides with the criminal, they were opposing Bunker in defense of the fugitive.

By this Jack inferred that they were not honest men.

Fully one hundred yards separated the boat from the shore, but Jack cried:

"He needs our help, boys!" cried the young inventor.

"Aye, but afore we kin reach shore they'll kill him," said Tim.

"Make a try, anyvay!" eagerly said Fritz. "Ve don't could stood here like fools und not do someding for him vonct."

"Aye, that's ther talk!" said Tim.

"Then here she goes! Arm yourselves—quick!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Tim, as he stumped out on deck.

Fritz followed him with some firearms.

Jack then sent the boat flying straight toward the land, to the rescue of the imperiled detective.

CHAPTER XII.

FOUND AND STOLEN.

The weapons with which Tim and Fritz were armed were long range rifles, and as the blinding glare of the searchlight flashed ashore upon the wreckers, the two friends aimed the guns at the crowd.

Startled by the sudden appearance of the light, the crowd had given utterance to a chorus of amazed cries, came to a pause, and stared out at the peculiar boat upon the water that was rushing toward them, sending ahead that blinding glare of light.

The detective saw the boat, too, and realized that help was coming.

As the Sleuth-Hound came flying toward the shore Jack shouted:

"On your lives, don't shoot that man!"

"Bah!" came a jeering yell from Dan Clifford. "Don't mind him, boys. They're a-comin' ter help ther cuss. Down with the detective! He's a spy on yer. If he escapes there'll soon be a gunboat here!"

Several of the wreckers raised their weapons to fire at Bunker.

Before they could pull a trigger, however, Tim and Fritz let drive from the deck of the boat, and the detective poured a terrific fire in upon his enemies from the top of the mound.

With cries of pain, fear and rage the wreckers retreated, leaving several of their number lying wounded upon the ground.

Tim went in and took the wheel.

Down from the mound sprang the detective, and he made a rush for the shore and dashed out into the surf.

By that time the Sleuth-Hound was within ten yards of the shore.

"Hard-a-lee!" cried Jack to the old sailor.

"Around she goes!" replied Tim, spinning the wheel.

The electric boat swerved off parallel to the shore.

"Haul to!" cried Jack.

"Up she comes!" replied Tim, stopping the screw.

"Back water—quick!"

"Aye, aye, lad!"

With reversed wheel the Sleuth-Hound paused.

The detective was swimming for her, and soon reached her side.

"Fling me a rope!" he panted.

"Stood by vonct und catch yourselluf dot line!" cried Fritz.

He hove a coil of rope to the detective, who made fast to it.

"All right—pull away!" shouted Bunker.

"Look out, thar!" yelled Tim. "Them lubbers ashore is going ter fire!"

Fritz hauled in on the line rapidly, for he saw that the wreckers had recovered, aimed their weapons out toward Bunker, and prepared to shoot.

"Heave the Sleuth-Hound around!" exclaimed Jack.

"Ah! Ye wanten git her atween ther wreckers an' Bunker, hey?" said Tim, as he turned the lever and spun the wheel.

Fritz was hauling in on the line as the submarine boat curved around, bringing the floating detective to the seaward of the boat.

The wreckers discharged a volley, but most of the bullets struck harmlessly against the hull of the boat, and escaped Fritz.

Seeing the Dutch boy could now get the detective up Jack suddenly shut off the lights, and the boat became enshrouded in gloom.

None of the men on shore could now see her.

She dashed straight out to sea, and Bunker got up on deck.

"I've been in many a danger before," said he, as he passed into the pilot-house with Fritz, "but hang me if this don't beat all."

"Why, what happened to you?" queried the boy.

"You see, I tracked the burglar to Merida," replied Bunker. "but he gave me a hot chase and slipped away. I followed him up. He must have fallen in with some of the gang of wreckers who live in the ruined city. Anyway, I afterwards discovered that he joined the gang, shot their leader, and constituted himself their captain. When I attempted to steal a march on him to-night and carry the beggar off a captive he got the best of me, called out the crowd, and they chased me through the town. I didn't get rattled till they cornered

me at the mound. And I'd have gone under if you had not come to my rescue just when you did."

"Well," answered Jack, "you can have all the chances you want to bag him now, since we've got him located so conveniently."

"How did you make out with the treasure?"

"I can't say I've placed it, but we found the red light and fog whistle just off the point of land yonder, and, as you know, we were opposite that point when Clifford flung it overboard."

"Good enough. That's a good start, anyway."

"To-morrow morning we will continue the search."

"I wouldn't lose any time about it," said Bunker, warningly.

"Why? You speak in tones of apprehension."

"It was my good fortune to overhear Clifford telling the lieutenant of the gang that he could find the box. They've got some expert divers, and plenty of submarine suits and tools to go down for the box, the lieutenant said, and they mean to search for it, too."

"That's alarming news. I didn't expect it. Anyway, we have got such great advantages over them for submarine work that I haven't got great fears for the result," said Jack confidently.

He brought the boat to a pause near his buoy and turned in.

It rained all night, but on the following morning the sun arose in a clear sky when Jack got up, and the boy surveyed the land with his glass and keenly watched the wreckers' village.

Every one in it seemed to be stirring, and there seemed to be great preparations going on among the boats, from which Jack deduced that his enemies were making ready to begin searching for the treasure.

It made the boy feel anxious.

"The burglar knows better than we do where the box lays sunk," he said to Fritz, "and we may have to fight for it."

"Donner vetter! Dot vill make us like it petter when ve got it. But mess vhas retty, und, if you blease, go in und haf preakfast vonct."

Jack did so, and by the time they were all in the pilot-house again, they saw that the men on shore were embarking.

With good judgment Jack then turned to his friends, and said:

"If we sink the boat, and watch the course taken by the gang, we can see about where Dan Clifford imagines the box of treasure lies. While they are preparing then to go down for it, we can forestall them by reaching the ground first and searching for it."

"Yust der plan for me!" chuckled Fritz. "Led her sunk."

Jack submerged the boat until only a part of the top of the pilot-house windows was on a level with the sea, and their shutters were down.

There were slats in the shutters, through which they could look, and the boat was then impervious to pistol bullets.

Within a short time two of the small sailboats put out from shore, carrying a score of the wreckers, and the boy saw them come to anchor not a great ways off.

"The time for action has arrived!" he announced, turning to his friends. "Fritz, get the diving suits in readiness, and be sure that each suit is provided with our submarine weapons."

"Fer sure!" assented the Dutch boy, hastening away.

"Now, Tim, have you located the sailboats?"

"Aye, aye!" cheerily responded the old sailor.

"Then send her down beneath them."

The Sleuth-Hound's machinery was put in motion, the small screws buzzed around, and slanting at an angle the submarining boat dove down into the briny depths.

It was a gravelly place, thickly overgrown with sea ane-

mones—living flowers of various colors—dense jungles of submarine bushes, and hills of rocks covered with vegetation, barnacles and sea mosses of exquisite figures.

By the time the Sleuth-Hound came to a pause, Jack, Bunker and Fritz had each donned their diving suits.

"Keep in sight of the Sleuth-Hound's lights," said Jack, before he screwed on the visor of his helmet. "Then you won't get lost."

"Are we to tackle any of Clifford's divers if they come down?" asked Bunker.

"By all means. Don't let them get the box if you can help it, and the surest way to prevent them succeeding is by keeping them away."

They then went out by the sea door in the roof.

From here they descended to the ground, their weighted shoes sinking deeply into the grasping sand, and started the electric lamps on their helmets.

Each one took a different direction, and began assiduously to search the singular formations of the sea's bed.

With every step they took they stirred up the sand, and it blurred the water around them, but it soon settled down again as they passed on.

Fully half an hour passed by.

None of them had yet seen any sign of the box.

Its whereabouts were as much a mystery as ever.

Jack's hopes began to rapidly diminish.

"It seems to me the thief has made a miscalculation," he muttered, as he went over a heap of stones. "I counted high on finding the box around here, as he ought to have—ha—by jingo!"

He paused as if transfixed.

"The box!" he gasped, in startled tones.

Right in front of him it lay on the sand.

The boy swooped down upon it, thrilled through.

And the next moment he had it in his hands.

"The search is over!" he gasped delightedly. "I've baffled Clifford!"

His joy was short-lived, however, for just then the shadowy figure of a strange diver glided up behind him, a powerful pair of hands flung him to the ground, and the precious box was snatched from him.

In another moment the thief was going off in full retreat with the box.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAUGHT BY THE ENEMY.

A more astonished person than Jack was never existed, and as he scrambled to his feet, found the box missing, and saw the retreating thief, his surprise gave way to indignation.

"I've been robbed!" he gasped. "If that diver came from one of the wreckers' vessels, and gets up to the surface with the box I may never see it again. I'll follow the wretch!"

Jack was not hampered by a life line and air tube as the other man was, and therefore could move through the water with much more freedom and agility than the fugitive.

He at once pursued the man.

The strange diver had melted away in the gloom.

But knowing in which direction he went, and darting the rays of his helmet lantern ahead, the young inventor followed the trail of the fugitive, and suddenly came in sight of him.

He had come to a pause, and was signaling to be hauled up.

The boy dashed forward and seized him.

But to his surprise he saw that the man did not have the box.

The people above now began to pull the diver up, and Jack let go of him, when the man suddenly seized him by both wrists, and despite the boy's struggles to get free held on to him tightly.

Jack could not get away.

Up went the diver, and up Jack was hauled with him.

"He means to make a captive of me," flashed through the young inventor's mind. "If he drags me away from this place the location of the treasure will remain a mystery still."

There was no getting away from the powerful clutch of the man, however, and Jack was unwillingly hauled up to the surface of the sea with the man.

Here he found himself taken aboard of one of the wreckers' boats, when two of the rascals relieved the diver of him.

His captors discarded his diving suit, and Jack saw that he was Clifford.

The men who held the boy now made an effort to take the metal suit off of him, but not knowing how to do so, they had to content themselves with opening his hinged helmet visor.

"Let go of me!" the boy exclaimed, when he could make his voice heard. "If you don't, I'll make you!"

"Tie him to the mast!" ordered the thief.

"Not if I know it," replied the boy.

He turned a thumbscrew in his suit, and a current of electricity flashed into it, and shocked the men who held him.

They did not know he carried a battery on his knapsack.

The boy's suit was lined with rubber, which insulated him from the electric current so that he could not feel it.

With yells of surprise the shocked men released him and sprang back, shaking their hands and glaring at the boy in horror.

"He's wuss'n a torpedo!" roared one of them.

"Don't let him get away!" roared Dan Clifford angrily.

"I don't see how you can prevent it," coolly replied Jack.

"Then I'll show you!" snarled the man. "I owe you a grudge, and I'll make the reckoning short between us—see?"

He snatched a pistol from the belt of one of his men as he spoke, and aiming it point-blank at the boy, he fired.

Jack reeled back a step.

The ball had staggered him, but failed to penetrate his armor.

A laugh rippled from his lips, and he cried in mocking tones:

"Fool! Did you imagine you could injure me?"

"Missed, by thunder!" raved Clifford furiously.

"No, you didn't. You hit me plumb over the heart. Try again."

"I will; and I'll finish you this time."

Again he took deliberate aim and fired.

True to its mark whistled the ball, but with no effect.

The faces of the wreckers blanched, and they recoiled from Jack.

"He isn't human!" yelled one of them. "No man can live under water in a divin' suit without air hose like him, an' no mortal kin stand up agin' pistol shots an' not feel 'em at sich short range, unless he's steel clad an inch thick, an' he isn't."

"It's my turn to return the shots now," said Jack.

He withdrew a pneumatic revolver from his belt, and rapidly discharged a dozen shots among them.

Every one of them was injured more or less, and Dan Clifford fell to the deck with a ball in his hip.

Leaving him where he fell, his companions rushed up forward, and Jack sprang to the side of the raving wretch, and pressing the point of his pistol against his head, the boy hissed:

"What have you done with the treasure box?"

"Don't fire!" yelled the rascal in alarm.

"Tell me, or you die!"

"I saw yer lamp a-comin' an' hid it."

"Where?" shouted Jack threateningly.

"Near where I took it from yer——"

Before Clifford could utter another word there sounded a deafening volley of reports from the pistols in the hands of the crew up forward, and a perfect hail of bullets whistled around the boy.

At the same moment the crew of the other boat came aboard.

Jack was not injured by any of the bullets, as fortunately none of them struck the glass plates in his helmet, but he saw that if the crowd fell upon him they might overpower him.

Considering discretion the better part of valor, he closed his visor.

Then he ran across the deck, clambered upon the bulwarks, and waving his hand defiantly to his enemies, just as they aimed to fire at him again, he dove down into the sea.

There came a splash, just as a deafening volley rang out, and the boy disappeared beneath the water.

Down he went toward the bottom like a shot, and he presently landed upon his lead-soled feet with a shock.

The yielding sand softened the effect of his fall through the water, and the upheaved sand soon settled down again.

Jack glanced around, and by the light of his lamp saw that he was quite close to the spot from which he had ascended.

The treasure must lay within a radius of one hundred feet of this spot, and as the location was marked by the anchors of the two vessels, he made up his mind to bring the Sleuth-Hound over there and continue the search till he found the box.

He therefore returned to the boat.

Fritz and the detective now stood upon the deck.

Motioning them to follow, he led the way inside, and as soon as their visors were opened, he surprised them all by giving an account of what had occurred to him.

"If we settle the Sleuth-Hound over the spot where those rascals' anchors lie," said the boy, "we can more easily keep them away from there, and search the place at our leisure. It will not require much time for three of us then to go over every inch of the ground, and we can then recover the box."

"Und s'bosen we cut dem anchor ropes so dose fellers trift away from der spods," suggested Fritz, "so dot vhen dey sendt down more ouf dem tifers, dey don't vhas by der righd blace."

"Aye, now, that's ther plan," assented Tim. "I reck-lect when I wuz in ther navy a lubber once told me——"

"The deuce with the navy!" impatiently said Jack. "To work, boys!"

"He assumed control of the boat, and raising her a few yards from the bottom, he started her ahead toward the place where the anchors of his enemies' vessels lay.

Within a few minutes they reached the spot, and he then brought the boat to a pause on the sandy bottom.

She had scarcely come to a stop, however, when Jack saw a large dark object come flying down from above and strike near by, when there came a terrific commotion in the water.

"A bomb!" exclaimed the boy, in startled tones.

"They must see our lights on the surface," said Bunker.

"Good Lord! Veer out o' here, lad, or they'll blow us ter pieces!" said Tim.

To stand such a bombardment was impossible, and the boy started the boat away, and put out the electric lights.

When he was at some distance from the place, Jack brought the Sleuth-Hound to a pause, and there was an angry look in his dark eyes, as he turned to Fritz and said:

"I'm going upon the surface and drive those rascals away."

"So long dot dey here remain," replied the Dutch boy,

"as long ve von't been aple to got near by dot blace mitout gotten shotten alretty."

The boy thereupon put the pumps in operation.

Emptying the Sleuth-Hound of her ballast, he sent her surfaceward, and the moment she emerged he saw that the two vessels had raised their anchors and were sailing away.

A thrill of dismay passed over the boy.

"We may as well give up all hope of speedily recovering the money box now," said he despairingly, "for by going from the place where it was sunk those vessels have left us without a guide to the place, and we are as bad off as ever."

"They probably realize that as well as we do," said Bunker, "and for that reason have departed to throw us off the track."

"Oh, they'll come back," said Tim. "Don't alarm yerselves. They ain't give up ther search theirselves yet, yer kin depend."

"In the meantime, we had better take advantage of their departure and continue the search then," said Jack.

The rest agreed with this plan.

So the boy submerged the boat.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TREASURE.

Jack was convinced that Dan Clifford had found some secure hiding place for the stolen box, and knew where to look for it.

He had been cute enough to impress on his mind the topography of the place where the vessels had been anchored, and when the Sleuth-Hound reached the bottom of the sea again, he began to search for a locality, the looks of which corresponded with the ships' anchorage.

It was no easy matter to do this, and several hours passed by.

The boy's determination had been thoroughly aroused, and he doggedly persevered in hunting, until at last his patience was rewarded.

He found the place where the two vessels had been anchored, and observed that the reason they had gotten away so rapidly was because they had merely slipped their anchors.

Both of them now rested on the sea's bed.

This was done for a twofold purpose.

Besides wishing to leave that vicinity quickly, Dan Clifford had shrewdly calculated that the anchors would prove to be a good mark of identification of the spot when he wished to return himself.

Having settled the submarine boat in a good location, Jack left her, and accompanied by Fritz he walked off in the direction Clifford had taken when he stole the box.

They closely scanned the ground over every foot of the way, and suddenly caught the dim outlines of a huge heap of rocks off to the left, and hastened toward them, for it looked like a likely place to search.

Indeed, these rocks were so close to the course Clifford must have taken that he might easily have hidden the box among them.

The face of the heap was broken by numerous fissures and openings, while the whole slimy mass was bristling with various aquatic plants.

Jack and Fritz paused at its base and began to search.

The rocks did not show the slightest evidence of anything foreign, and as the two boys drew close to the largest opening they suddenly caught the gleam of an enormous pair of eyes in the dark recess.

The young inventor clutched his companion's arm and re-

coiled, for he saw that there was an enormous deep-sea monster crouching within the aperture, its lurid glance fixed intently upon them.

As they drew back the lights of their lamps fell upon the creature, and they shuddered at the horrible appearance of the beast.

It bore a strong resemblance to a gigantic toad, its enormous eyes sticking out of its head, the green, mottled skin covered with protuberances, and its enormous mouth agape, displaying its teeth.

For but one instant it remained there, and then it leaped forward with a spring that drove its body like a dart through the water.

Jack and Fritz sprang aside, but the Dutch boy tripped over a mass of tangled weeds and fell flat on his face.

Before he could do anything to save himself, the monster reached him, landing on his body with a terrific shock.

Fritz struggled to arise, but the overwhelming weight bearing down upon him was too much for him, and the moment he moved his arms and legs, the beast caught one of his hands in its mouth, its jaws came together, and it strove to bite him.

In this effort it was unsuccessful, however, as the strong armor ably resisted all its efforts, upon discovering which it dragged the boy back to its gloomy den.

Jack saw that his friend was yet uninjured.

He drew one of his pneumatic revolvers and sprang into the hole, when he saw that the beast was upon Fritz, preventing him from rising.

The young inventor thereupon took deliberate aim for the creature's head and fired an explosive ball into it.

With a smothered intonation it burst in the monster's skull, tearing a large hole there, and causing the creature jump.

It came so suddenly that Jack was unprepared, and as it hit him, he was knocked down as if struck by a battering ram.

The strange submarine beast passed over him and fled.

Jack scrambled to his feet, and glancing around, saw the strange creature disappearing in the dense gloom beyond.

He then went into the den, and there found Fritz on his hands and knees, staring down at something on the ground in front of him.

The floor of the den was strewn with bones.

They evidently came from the victims the beast had devoured, and among them the young inventor distinguished the skulls of several human beings.

He walked toward Fritz, when the fat boy suddenly sprang to his feet, and to Jack's astonishment he saw that the young Dutchman held the treasure box in his hands.

Fritz was dancing an elephantine breakdown to show his delight over the recovery of the box, and with eager steps the boy approached him, and satisfied himself that it was indeed the treasure box.

He shook hands with his friend, and then motioned with his fingers:

"Hurrah for us! We've got the best of Dan Clifford after all!"

"Are you sure this is the box we are searching for?" answered Fritz.

"Positive of it. The monster must have found it where the thief hid it, and dragged it into his den."

"Let us return to the boat and see if its contents are intact."

"Come on. Won't our friends be surprised?"

They passed out of the recess in the rocks, and proceeded back to the submarine boat.

Bunker and Tim were amazed and delighted to see the box.

As soon as they had divested themselves of their suits, they forced open the box and found the contents intact.

The money, papers and bonds were soaking wet, and were laid out to dry, after which Fritz served supper.

As they all sat around the table, Jack said:

"We have accomplished all that we have set out to do, but Dan Clifford is yet at large, Bunker, and to-morrow it is my intention to help you make an effort to capture him."

"It will be a hard job," replied the detective, in nettled tones, "for he has intrenched himself among a gang of ruffians who have no regard for life, and will fight for him to the last gasp."

On the following morning at daybreak the Sleuth-Hound arose from the sea like some gigantic monster, near the coast.

The sun was just rising over the land, and as Jack glanced out at the wreckers' village, he saw that very few of the residents were stirring.

Near the projecting strip of land there was a sheltered lagoon from which a dense marsh ran back, and the boy drove his boat into the shallow sheet of water, and brought her to a pause close to a mass of drifting logs.

Here she was moored.

The place was surrounded by dense shrubbery that lent it a lonesome and forbidding appearance, and myriads of insects swarmed in the air and through the marshes.

"We can go ashore from here," said Jack, "and spy around the village. When we find out where our man is located we can swoop down on him and then return, carrying him with us."

"He was wounded in the hip," said the detective.

"So much the better for us. Fritz, have you got the armor ready?"

"Yah! Here dey vhas! Put 'em on."

They donned their suits and went ashore on the floating logs, plunged into the bushes, and disappeared from Tim's sight.

Scarcely had the old sailor been left alone five minutes when the logs, beside which the Sleuth-Hound was moored, began to move, and the figures of several men came up from the water among them.

These men were part of the wreckers' gang.

Having seen the boat coming they had lowered themselves in the water between the logs, and there remained hidden from sight, watching everything that transpired on the vessel.

Tim was in the pilot-house, gazing after his friends, when the rascals came up on the vessel over the stern.

Creeping up forward, they suddenly burst in upon the old sailor, and ere he could defend himself he was knocked down and bound hand and foot.

The invaders then rushed through the boat, and the very first object of interest they saw was the treasure box.

Jack had returned their contents when they were dried, and left the box standing on a small side table in the cabin.

With a cry of exultation the wreckers seized upon it, and when they had assured themselves what it was their delight knew no bounds.

A groan escaped Tim.

"Ther boat's in thar persession, an' they've got ther money," he muttered dismally. "Now, I s'pose, they'll murder me."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIX SWIMMERS.

Unaware of the fact that the Sleuth-Hound and the box of treasure had been captured by some of the wreckers, who

had made a prisoner of Tim, the young inventor and his friends left the marshy lagoon behind them and proceeded toward the ruined city.

Dan Clifford had been wounded, and they expected to capture him very easily and carry him back to New York for punishment.

Passing ahead in the dense foliage in the dark gray of the early morning, Jack, Fritz and Bunker, clad in their metal suits, soon came in sight of the wreckers' stronghold.

It presented a deserted appearance yet.

"Don't trust to appearances, though," cautioned Jack. "Such lawless men would not leave their place unguarded for a moment. We must not walk into a trap, for there are ten times as many of those rascals as our number, and once they place us at a disadvantage I'm afraid we would fare badly."

In a few minutes they drew close to the houses, but saw with surprise that they really were deserted.

There was not a soul in the place.

"Strange," remarked Bunker. "What has become of them?"

"Maybe dey vhas down in dot reservoir?" suggested Fritz.

"Something must have happened, then, to drive them there," said Jack. "See—there's the entrance to it now."

He pointed to a large opening in the ground, down into which they saw a flight of rough stone stairs descending.

The others had scarcely time to observe the place, when there sounded a sudden chorus of yells around them, and they were startled to see that they were surrounded by a band of Mayas.

It then became evident that the wreckers had been attacked during the night by these savages, and therefore had taken refuge elsewhere to escape them.

There were over a hundred of the natives, and all were armed.

Jack saw that they were in a dangerous situation, and shouted to his friends:

"The wreckers are out of our reach. We can't whip those Mayas. Retreat!"

"We will have to cut our way out," replied the detective.

"If we don't reach the boat we are lost!"

"Donner und blitzen! Come for dem, den!" yelled Fritz.

They wheeled around and fired at the natives in back of them, opening a passage back to the dense shrubbery, and made a dash for it.

With a shout the other natives fired their arrows and spears at the three, who barely avoided being hit by getting behind a heap of rocks.

Down they went upon their knees, and as the Mayas came on, they opened fire upon them, and brought them to a pause.

The savages' weapons now broke harmlessly against the rock, and they recoiled before the disastrous fire of the three, leaving many of their number lying prostrate where they had fallen.

As soon as Jack saw them in full retreat, he exclaimed:

"Now is our chance to escape without injury. Should we wait until they rally from their fright, they will attack us among the shrubbery, and the result would be fatal."

"Here vhas their tracks back to the lagoon, but when they got there they found that the Sleuth-Hound was gone."

"Confound Tim! What ailed him to take the boat away?" growled the detective, in impatient tones. "We're in a sorry plight now."

"Something must have happened to cause him to go, you can rest assured," said Jack in tones of conviction.

"Und here dem sefages vhas come back," said Fritz.

He pointed in among the verdure, and they saw the dark faces of their enemies moving about, trailing them to the lagoon.

"Keep to the water's edge," said Jack. "There's a steep embankment to shelter us, and we can make a break for the

sea shore under its protection. Perhaps we may be able to signal him."

They ran along the muddy shore in a stooping posture, and had gained a considerable distance toward the sea beach before the Mayas discovered what became of them.

A dropping fire then ensued between them, both parties shooting as they ran, but while the shrubbery concealed the natives the three fugitives were protected by the steep embankment, so that none of them were injured on either side.

In this manner Jack and his companions reached the rocky headland and came out by the surf.

If the Mayas now wished to get in shooting range, they would have to expose themselves, and this they were very careful not to do.

Jack glanced out upon the heaving water, over which the sun was just rising, and saw his boat.

It was going along within fifty yards of the shore.

"The wreckers have captured her!" he gasped, as he saw the rascals.

"Holy Moses! Den dey got der money!" roared Fritz.

"And we left with no means of escape," said Bunker despairingly.

"They've got Tim at the wheel with a revolver at his head."

"Forcing him to work the boat for them, I suppose?"

"Ach, vhy I vhasn't apoard to helb him alretty?"

Just then the men on the Sleuth-Hound saw Jack, Fritz and Bunker, and a derisive yell pealed from their lips.

"We've got the money box and got the boat, and you can stay ashore till you perish!" yelled one of them.

"How under heaven did they steal this march on Tim?" muttered Jack.

"See the smugglers' sailboats!" said Bunker. "Let us try to get aboard of one, and we can perhaps stand a better chance, then of keeping out of the Mayas' clutches and regaining the Sleuth-Hound."

"I tink so neider!" coincided Fritz, brightening up.

"Very well—there's a long run to the beach off which they are moored," said Jack, "but we can cover it in safety."

They started off at once, and the savages attempted to follow, but a few well-directed shots drove them back screaming.

The three reached the vicinage of the sailboats presently, and wading out to the largest sloop, they got aboard and cut the cable.

Up went the mainsail and jib, and as the canvas caught the breeze, Jack grasped the helm and steered the boat out in deep water.

They were out of the Mayas' reach, and seeing the Sleuth-Hound half a mile ahead of them going up the coast, they sailed the sloop after her with a free wind.

The topsail and flying-jib were then hoisted aloft, and under the impetus of this extra canvas the speed of the boat increased.

Along she bowled at the rate of twelve knots an hour, and the young inventor saw Tim looking back at them.

"He has seen that we are pursuing," said the boy, with a grim smile, "and he is cagey enough to do all he can to aid us."

"Where dey vhas dot poat bringin', anyvay?" asked Fritz.

"She isn't going quite so fast now," the detective observed shrewdly.

"Then I ain't mistaken in the old sailor."

"Looker dot—she for dot island vhas headin'."

"And, by thunder, I see a big ship there, Wright!"

"That's bad! It belongs to the wreckers, I'll bet," said Jack.

A short distance from the mainland there was a large key that was covered with dried-up vegetation, and the Sleuth-

Hound was then heading straight for it at a point where there was a small bay in which a big ship was anchored.

The submarine boat had just come abreast of the entrance to the bay, when Jack saw her come to a pause and begin to sink.

"Tim is tricking them!" the boy cried.

"Hurray!" bawled Fritz. "Dem vellers vhas shumpin' oferboard!"

"We will be among them before they can reach the island by swimming, too," chuckled Bunker delightedly.

On dashed the sloop, and the Sleuth-Hound went down till the waves were lapping over her decks, by which time every one of the wreckers on her had taken to the water.

Only Tim remained on board.

And as they came dashing up to the submarine boat they saw that the Sleuth-Hound's descent was stopped, while upon the face of the old sailor there was a broad grin.

In a few moments the sloop reached the under-water boat, and abandoning the sailing vessel, the three boarded the boy's boat.

"Hurry up!" roared Tim. "They've got the money from the box."

Jack ran into the pilot-house and cut Tim free.

The other two then joined them.

In the water there were half a dozen of the wreckers, all of whom were rapidly swimming for the island.

"Which one of them has the contents of the box?" asked Jack.

"It's divided up atween 'em," replied Tim.

"You'll have to haul them all in to get the money back," said the detective.

Jack started his boat after the swimmers, after raising her.

They had a good start of him, but under full power the Sleuth-Hound rapidly bore down upon them, and Tim, Fritz and the detective ran out on deck to fish up the fugitives.

At the same moment they saw the big ship, manned by many of the wreckers, come gliding out of the bay toward the fugitives, and observed that her crew were arming themselves.

It was evident that the wreckers were bent upon rescuing their friends, and the race between the two boats to reach the men first soon became an exciting contest.

CHAPTER XVI.

INTO HIS OWN TRAP.

The Sleuth-Hound was so much the faster of the two boats that it was evident she would be the first to reach the swimmers.

But just as Jack was surest of an easy victory, there came a warning, grating noise under the keel of the Sleuth-Hound. She had run upon a shoal, as the tide was running out.

Jack had just time to swing her around, to avoid landing high and dry, and she ran out into deep water again.

The ship was in a channel that was well known to the wreckers, and therefore had the advantage of the submarine boat.

On swam the six men, and they reached their ship.

The race was virtually lost now, and with a troubled look on his face Jack turned to Tim, who had entered the pilot-house, and said:

"That settles it! They'll keep the treasure now, old fellow."

"Gosh! What hard luck!" growled the old sailor.

"How under the sun did those fellows get the best of you, anyhow?"

Tim explained the matter, and by the time he finished the boy saw that the fugitives had been taken aboard of the ship, and she came about and tacked away along the island.

Jack drove the Sleuth-Hound after her.

It was impossible to get in any nearer to the island then, as it was surrounded by a sand-bar, the channels through which he could now see, as the tide was low enough to bear its top, and they had to stand off to sea again.

Late in the afternoon, when the tide was low, they observed an opening in the bar at some distance away.

"There's the place for us to pass through," said Jack, pointing to the spot. "But we must try to get in without allowing our enemies to see us, by going through under water."

"I see some men watching us with glasses now, from the top of those trees over yonder," said the detective.

"Just what I expected," the boy replied; "but we can cloak our movements with the water. I'll run out to sea and sink the boat. Fritz, get one of the torpedoes and some wire."

"Vot for?" the Dutch boy asked, in surprise.

"I'm going to set a trap for that ship. When we go in the passage through the sand flats you can be ready to leave the boat under water and plant a bomb there with wire attached, so that if their craft attempts to pass its hull will strike the wires and explode the torpedo."

"Ach! Maybe dat vill spoil our chances ouf gotten dat money back."

"We'll risk it, for during our stay beneath the water the ship may try to bolt out and get away from us," said Jack.

The Dutch boy nodded and left the pilot-house.

When Jack had sent his craft a mile away from the entrance he sunk her a few feet below the surface, turned her around, and ran her straight back for the entrance.

They reached it in a short time, and found it to be a deep, narrow channel, and upon reaching the middle of it the boat was stopped, and Fritz left her in a diving suit and planted the mine.

Having strung the wire across the channel near the surface, he returned to the interior of the boat, and she went ahead.

The searchlight showed them that the ground between the island and the outer bar was clear and sandy, and they pressed ahead toward the place where they had last seen the ship.

This was in a small indentation surrounded by bushes and trees, and they soon reached it, but found that the vessel was gone.

Under water it was now next to impossible to locate the ship, and the young inventor brought her up to the surface high enough to take a survey of the situation.

The place they were in had rocky shores, and a gaping aperture ahead showed Jack a large water cavern, which was half flooded, even at low tide, and he steered the boat into it.

A shaft of light ahead showed him a small opening covered by bushes, by which they could leave the cavern and get out on the island.

"It is necessary for a couple of us to go ashore," he remarked, when he had the boat in a favorable position. "We must locate the ship. When that is done we can attack her in such a manner beneath the water that her crew will either have to surrender the money and their leader to us, or get blown sky high."

"For my part, I'm willing to venture anything," said the detective.

"I'll go, too," readily said Tim.

"No, you could not run fast if it became necessary. I'll go," said Jack.

He thereupon gave Tim and Fritz some instructions, and he and the detective then put on their metal suits, as they

expected to encounter some of the wreckers on the island, and meant to render their bodies impervious to the pistol bullets.

Having armed themselves, the boy and the detective left the boat, and passing through the opening in the cavern, they emerged into a glen among the dead tropical vegetation.

The sun was declining and a gentle breeze was blowing as they pushed their way among the withered shrubbery and headed toward the most elevated ground in the center of the island.

It was decided between them that the ship must yet be lurking somewhere around the island, and they expected soon to see it.

They had not gone very far before they observed a camp-fire ahead, and creeping up nearer, saw that it was blazing in the midst of the woods, and was surrounded by their enemies.

The first person they saw was Dan Clifford.

He stood leaning against a tree watching his men cooking their supper, and heard him say to one of them:

"We must git ther ship out in deep water ter-night, boys. There ain't no tellin' what Jack Wright may be doin' from one minute to another. He's a powerful cunnin' boy, and no mistake."

"But some un saw his craft go down," said one of the men.

"Of course. It's a submarine boat. No wonder. That's the trouble. She's apt to come up at any unlikely spot. Who knows where? Then what happens? You all know what kind o' weapons he uses."

"May blow us up, hey?"

"More'n likely. Anyway, it makes me fidgetty."

"But the ship's in a snug haven now, Cap."

"To be sure. That won't do no good if he appears, though."

"Well, it's goin' to be a moonlight night, too, or I'm a sinner."

"So much the worse for us. He knows we've got the treasure, and is sure to try an' git it back again."

"You've got the money, you mean to say."

"Of course. I'm treasurer for the gang, ain't I?"

"Yes—that's the agreement."

"Then what are you kickin' about? Won't I divide up later on?"

"We won't grumble, Cap. What do you advise?"

"To put out to sea on a cruise. There's more money a-takin' ships on ther high seas than waitin' like an angler-fish for a victim to come to you. The Mayas are mighty troublesome just now, and may be gone when we return."

"True for you. We are all in for your plans, as we've been havin' terrible dull times for a long time past."

Jack nudged his companion, and counted the man around the fire.

There were eight of them, including Dan Clifford, and he was just about to whisper something to his companion when two noosed ropes fell from the branches of a tree above them.

The nooses fell squarely over them, and were suddenly jerked taut before Jack or Bunker could do anything to defend themselves.

With their arms pinioned they were hurled to the ground by the two men up in the tree over their heads, the bushes crashing as they fell into them, and startling the men around the fire.

"Help! Help!" cried their captors.

The men about the fire rushed to their assistance.

At a glance they observed what had occurred, and pounced down upon the armored pair, tied them hand and foot.

Gasping and disgusted, they lay side by side, and heard their captors remark, as they glanced down at them:

"What are they?"

"Where did they come from?"

"Who can they be, anyway?"

As the visors were closed, their features were hidden.

Dan Clifford was not deceived or mystified about them, though.

"It's a pair of Wright's men," he said. "The submarine boat must have landed somewhere to put them ashore. Then this is our chance to get away. Carry them aboard the ship, an' we'll get under way as quick as possible."

The prisoners were then transferred to the vessel, which lay in a lagoon near by, and sail was made, and she glided away.

A thrill of horror passed over Jack.

"When they go through the channel they will explode the torpedoes," he whispered to Bunker. "This ship will be blown up, and we will perish with the rest. We are hauled into our own trap."

The detective was filled with horror over their peril.

CHAPTER XVII.

HEROIC MEASURES.

Tim and Fritz remained on board the Sleuth-Hound patiently awaiting the return of their friends, and to pass the time away they made a close examination of the boat, to see if everything was in proper order.

When this was done, they went out on deck.

An hour had passed by since Jack and the detective had gone, and following the boy's orders the old sailor called Fritz.

"We has our orders to run along ther coast an' see if thar's anything wrong a-goin' on."

"Vell, vhas I say anyding against id?"

The old sailor started the boat from the water cave, and she ran out upon the sea, when Tim suddenly beheld the wrecker's ship under full sail, heading for the opening in the sand flats where the bomb was planted.

A moment afterwards there came a shout from the vessel.

"Help. Tim!" was the cry.

It thrilled the old sailor.

"Blow me if it ain't Jack's voice!" he gasped.

"Where id come from?" demanded Fritz.

"Aboard o' yonder ship," said Tim. "Can't yer hear?"

"Nein!"

"Well, he's thar, and that ship's a-sailin' fer ther channel. As soon as she strikes ther wire, ther torpedo busts, an' away she goes."

"Vell, ain't dot vot ve vant?"

"Lunkhead! Jack will git killed wi' them, won't he?"

"Holy jiminey cricket! Dot's so. I didn't tink ohf dot!"

"If we kin overhaul that ship an' stop her, we'll save Jack's life. If we fail, he'll git blowed ter glory."

Putting full speed on the boat, Tim rapidly forced her up to the flying ship, when Dan Clifford yelled at him:

"Keep away, or we'll blow yer to pieces!"

"Haul to, or yer'll git blowed up!"

This came from Tim.

"Oh, we ain't afraid of ye!" came the defiant cry.

"I don't mean the way you do," shouted Tim. "Thar's a big tarpeder sunk in ther channel, awaitin' fer yer—d'ye see?"

"Oh, you can't fool me! Stand off, now!"

"Fool! Then I'll make her come to!" growled Tim.

Just then he saw the ship round up in the wind, and the

black, frowning muzzle of a gun of heavy calibre was aimed squarely at the Sleuth-Hound in a dangerous manner.

"Look out!" yelled Fritz. "Sink her! Sink her, Tim!"

"Down she goes afore they kin fire," replied the sailor.

And just as the shot roared out the boat began to descend.

The ball flew over the Sleuth-Hound and struck the water.

When the boat was beneath the surface Tim decided to take the law into his own hands, for he cried:

"Put on a divin' suit, Fritz, an' go outside, make fast to ther lubber's starn post, an' we'll haul him away from ther passage, anyway. I won't allow Jack to git killed."

The Dutch boy soon was ready and went outside with a stout rope in his hand, and the Sleuth-Hound reached the ship.

She was near enough to the bottom of the keel to allow Fritz to make the rope fast to her rudder.

The other end he tied to a stanchion.

By this time the ship had forged ahead into the channel, and the Dutch boy hastened up to the pilot-house window, and motioned to Tim that everything was in readiness.

With that the sailor turned the Sleuth-Hound around, and putting on full power drove her toward the land, pulling the ship after her, whether her crew so willed or not.

And they were none too soon, for by that time the vessel was almost over the sunken torpedo.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FIERY TRIAL.

The wreckers were furious when they found that the Sleuth-Hound had them in tow, and with a scowl upon his ugly face Dan Clifford turned to Jack and Bunker, who lay on the deck.

"You're to blame for this!" he hissed, shaking his fist at the boy.

"How do you make that out?" asked Jack coolly.

"If ye hadn't yelled to 'em they wouldn't have seen us escapin'."

"Well, they've saved us from sure destruction."

"There must have been some truth in your warnin', then?"

"I'm not in the habit of lying."

"See here, Wright, much as I hate you and this detective, I'm going to make a compromise with you," said Clifford.

"Name your terms."

"Our lives and liberty for yours."

"That's fair. I'll take you up."

"Notify your friends under water, then."

"I will when they come up."

"Don't make any agreement with them, Jack," said Bunker.

"There's no help for it," replied Jack. "We are in their power, and their craft is in Tim's power. They could murder us, or Tim could blow them and their craft to pieces. After the compromise is effected we can meet them on even terms again."

"That's the talk," said Clifford, with a nod.

"What do you propose?" queried Jack.

"We will set yer ashore," replied the bank burglar. "After yer Sleuth-Hound runs out ter sea ten miles. Then we will sail away. You must promise not to go fer us till to-morrow."

"That suits me," replied the boy, for he depended upon his boat's speed to overhaul the ship very easily.

The Sleuth-Hound soon afterward ascended to the surface, and Jack was assisted to the rail of the ship and hailed Tim.

"I say, Tim!" he shouted.

"Wot d'yer want?" replied the old sailor.

"We are at each other's mercy, and must compromise. Their lives and liberty for ours. Run ten miles out to sea. Then come back to the island and pick us up while these men get away. We are not to molest them until to-morrow."

"Lordy! Did yer agree ter that?"

"Yes. Take up the torpedo from the inlet."

"Werry good!" assented Tim.

Soon after the line he had made fast to the fox, as the

Soon after the line he had made fast to the Fox, as the peared beneath the water and hastened away.

The torpedo was taken up by Fritz.

Then the submarine ascended and sped away to sea.

Upon observing that Tim was keeping good faith, the thief ordered one of the boats lowered, and Jack and Bunker were embarked.

Two men then rowed them ashore, led them into the interior of the island, and tied them fast to two trees.

Returning to the ship, they went aboard, and as soon as the Sleuth-Hound was at the requisite distance and fired a rocket as a signal to that effect, the ship put out to sea.

Jack and the detective watched the Fox until she disappeared around the island, and then the boy exclaimed:

"That's the last we will see of her for some time, but I have faith in my ability to track that ship down with the Sleuth-Hound and capturing Dan Clifford, to say nothing of the treasure. He has it in his possession, as you may have heard him admit near the camp-fire."

"Have you any idea which direction he will take?" asked Bunker.

"No; but we can inquire. The Gulf of Mexico on the other side of Yucatan is a great stamping ground for lawless men like those, and it is likely that he'll go that way."

Just then the detective happened to glance over his shoulder, and he gave a violent start, and exclaimed in tones of dismay:

"Good heavens, Wright, the woods are on fire!"

"Can this be the result of a fiendish design?" gasped the boy, for the detective had told the truth, as he saw at a glance.

The dried-up brushwood and hay-like grass were ignited, and the wind was sweeping the flames toward them!

In a few moments they were bound to be surrounded by the fiery, smoky element, and the harrowing thought entered their minds that they might roast to death ere the Sleuth-Hound got back to the island and their friends could rescue them.

Great clouds of smoke were rolling up skyward.

If Tim and Fritz saw it they could make no mistake as to its cause, and would therefore hasten their movements.

Jack had seen his boat far out at sea a few minutes before, but now, upon looking for it, saw nothing.

A horrible fear entered his mind.

"Bunker, I think they have submerged her!"

"Oh, Lord! Then they won't see the fire!" replied the detective.

"If they don't the flames will reach us before they do."

"That settles our fate, then."

The crackling of the burning wood now plainly reached their ears, and each gust of wind blew clouds of smoke about their heads, causing them to cough and choke.

Their metal suits would make it worse for them after they once got heated, and held the heat, but they would keep away the first discomfort of the flames, no doubt.

Eagerly straining their glances out over the darkening waters, the two helpless prisoners tugged and strained at their bonds in an effort to burst them.

It was a useless attempt, however.

Flocks of birds, frightened from the trees, went flying by with loud cries of alarm, and they heard the fire draw nearer every moment.

Presently the heat manifested itself.

A ruddy glow was sent to the sky and flung far out ahead of the boys, and as the flames spread and augmented a terrible roaring sound ensued that sent a shudder through the two.

Myriads of sparks filled the air.

The night breeze carried them along in showers, and rained them down upon the sea, while over the island a great cloud of smoke now hung and streaked out with the wind.

"Any signs of the boat yet, Wright?" asked the detective.

"None," was the boy's laconic answer.

"The fire is almost up to us now."

"I feel it. I'm sweating. I'm parched!"

"Oh, why did those scoundrels tie us here?"

"Don't despair. We ain't dead yet, Bunker."

The cheery tone of Jack, despite the peril menacing them, made the officer feel lighter hearted, and he said:

"My profession has probably brought me nearer to death oftener than you have ever been, but you shame me by your courage."

"I don't give way to alarm," said the boy, "because I seem to bear a charmed life. I never expect to perish by violence. Never have I been in peril yet that I did not escape in the end."

"Well, I hope your phenomenal good fortune will stand by you in this instance, for I assure you a terrible death is pretty close to us now."

"You'll see," quietly answered the boy.

By this time the all-devouring flames rushed up to them, and it began to look as if Jack was a false prophet.

For an instant it looked as if they were doomed.

The heat strangled and the smoke choked them, and their suits of metal grew hot and held the heat to them.

For an instant it looked as if they were doomed.

But just then Fritz came flying up to them, panting and pale.

"Shack!" he shouted.

"I told you so!" said the boy, smiling at Bunker.

"Cut our bonds—quick!" the detective gasped.

Fritz liberated them, and away they rushed pell mell for the shore, where the Sleuth-Hound lay on the water.

Once inside the boat, away from land she was driven by Tim, and by the time she got out to the sand flats the boy and his friend had taken off their armor and recovered.

The weather was oppressively hot, but the fire made it ten times worse, and they were glad to get away from the fiery isle.

Out through the channel on the heaving bosom of the sea shot the Sleuth-Hound, and as Jack glanced back he saw that the entire island was wrapped in a mass of flames.

"The wreckers did not keep faith with me," said the boy.

"It's like their treachery," Tim replied.

"Then I won't keep faith with them."

"By no means," said Bunker.

"Pursue their ship at once, then, Tim."

"Aye, aye, my hearty!" the sailor answered, complying.

"Fritz, you only just reached us in time."

"Yah! I tink so neider."

"The adventure has given me a good appetite. Get supper ready."

"In lesser as no dime," replied Fritz, hurrying away aft.

"Can you see the Fox yet, Tim?"

"Not a sign o' her, but I reckoner wot course she follered, an' I'll do ther same. Geerusalem, wot a dark night on ther water!"

It was a dark night, but in nowise daunted by it, the old salt kept the Sleuth-Hound speeding, and they left the island and drove on.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE TRAIL.

Two days later the boat was driving along in a choppy sea, having seen nothing of the Fox since starting their hunt for her.

Jack called the detective into the pilot-house.

"We're in hard luck, ain't we?" the boy asked.

"I didn't expect to run down Dan Clifford in a great hurry, Wright."

"Two days gone and not a sign of him."

"Whereabouts are we now, do you suppose?"

"Somewhere off Campeachy near the island of De Po Real."

"Isn't that a ship coming up the coast there to the southwest?"

"Sure enough! A schooner, and yet I see no sails up."

"Probably she rides there at anchor."

"I'll run over to her. Perhaps her crew may post us."

"Do so, by all means. I'm wild with impatience, Wright."

The boy steered his boat over to the idly rocking vessel, which was then about a league away, a short distance from the coast.

In a short time they drew close to the craft, but failed to see any one upon her deck, and observed, moreover, that she was adrift.

"There's something wrong about that vessel," said Jack suspiciously.

"Why not board her? We may discover the trouble," suggested Bunker.

"Very well. You go aboard when I run alongside."

And so saying the boy sent his craft up to the drifting schooner, and as they came together the Sleuth-Hound paused there.

Bunker clambered aboard and glanced around questioningly.

Not a soul met his view, but he saw that the cargo of the craft had been hauled up through the hatchway and was spilled about.

A general scene of disorder seemed to prevail everywhere.

The detective walked aft and passed into the cabin.

Here a startling scene met his view.

The place was filled with a dozen men, every one of whom was bound and gagged, while several were seriously wounded.

Bunker saw at a glance that they were Mexicans, and as he could not speak Spanish, he called Jack aboard and told him the news.

The boy was astonished.

He cut the strangers free, and they demonstrated their joy and gratitude to him by various manifestations.

As soon as their extravagances abated, Jack asked their leader:

"Are you the captain of this craft?"

"Senor, I have the honor to be, and these men are my crew."

"How came you in this plight, may I inquire?"

"It is the result of a pirate's attack upon us, senor."

"You have been robbed, I imagine, from the appearance of the vessel."

"True, sir, and not more than six hours ago, near this spot."

"And who was your assailant?"

"The crew of a ship called the Fox."

"Ah, indeed! Do you hear that, Bunker?"

"Our old enemy's ship."

"Yes—the man said her crew committed this deed six hours ago."

"In that case, we are upon the right track after all!"

Jack thereupon questioned the captain of the ill-fated schooner and found that he was in the coasting trade, and had met with the Fox, when some of her crew got aboard, and ere he knew what was intended, they fell upon the hapless Mexicans and made prisoners of them."

The schooner was rifled of all her valuables.

"In which direction did the Fox go when through with you?" asked Jack, when the captain had ended his recital of the facts.

"Straight ahead, along the coast."

"You don't know where her destination is?"

"No. I'm sorry to say, I don't."

"That will do. Resume charge of your craft—we will depart and try to capture the villain. Perhaps we may avenge you."

"God grant that you may. I am a poor man, and could not afford to lose all I did," said the captain sadly.

Leaving the man in command of his vessel, Jack and the detective returned on board of the Sleuth-Hound.

Speed was then put on, and she shot away, leaving the crew of the steamer getting their vessel under sail.

Jack felt jubilant.

He now had a clew by means of which he hoped to soon get upon the track of his enemy.

"Dan Clifford has given us the go-by so often by his trickery, I don't intend to bandy many words with him if we meet," said the boy to Tim; "but I'll pitch right into him and make short work of it."

"We won't be long a-finding him, either, lad," replied the old sailor, "'cause we're in a notch that don't contain much sailin' room, and thar won't be a cussed lot o' maneuvering afore we comes together."

"Fritz, is the pneumatic gun in working order?"

"I see me dot putty gwick," said the Dutch boy.

He dragged the weapon out on its carriage from a recess in the deck-house, and closely examined the peculiar instrument.

It looked like a gatling gun, but worked by air pressure, and was capable of firing ten shots without stopping.

The weapon was in order, but not loaded.

Fritz, therefore, brought out ten cartridges.

They were long brass cylinders with lead caps, loaded with an explosive powder of enormous force.

According to Jack's instructions, Fritz left the gun on deck in the bow, and secured it there with guy-ropes.

Then he went out on top of the deck-house with a powerful glass, and scanned the sea in all directions in quest of the Fox.

He remained there until sundown before he saw anything.

Then he made out a small island off to the southward, and Jack drove the Sleuth-Hound over to it.

Upon the shore was a small fisher village, and the boy ran his craft into a tiny bay and up to a dock.

Several of the swarthy-skinned inhabitants of the place had come down upon the pier to see what sort of a craft the Sleuth-Hound was, and Jack went out on deck and accosted them.

"We are looking for a ship named the Fox," said the boy, "and beg leave to ask if you have seen her near here?"

"No, we have not," replied one of the men.

"Wait!" interposed one of the spectators. "I may be able to give you the news you seek. While out from shore a league, several hours ago, I saw a large ship of the name you mention passing by."

"Indeed!" said Jack joyfully. "In which direction did she go?"

"She was heading for the southwest."

"That would bring her shoreward, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, somewhere between the Bay of Tabasco and Goazocotlan."

Jack thanked his informant, and tacked away in the indicated direction with all speed, for the information he received showed plainly that the train was getting warm.

Perhaps one of the most difficult feats to perform is to track a vessel on the sea, but the boy was succeeding admirably.

The Sleuth-Hound came in sight of the Mexican coast and ran along to the northward, when night settled down bright and moonlit.

Fritz remained on watch.

About an hour after the moon arose they heard him cry:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away?" queried Jack, staring around.

"Vell, apoud fife mile away ower by der shore."

"Can you make out what she is?"

"Yah—a bick ship, ouf course."

With a faint smile Jack took his glass down from the rack on the wall, and going out on deck he leveled the binocular at the vessel, and saw that she was an entire stranger.

A look of disappointment crossed his face.

He was just about to lower the glass, when suddenly he saw the Fox shoot out from behind a projecting strip of land, and bear down upon the stranger full sail.

"By Jove! There she is now!" he exclaimed.

"Und she vhas goin' to attack dot ship!" cried Fritz, excitedly.

"Tim! Tim! Put on speed and head for those two vessels!" cried the boy.

"Ay, aye, my hearty!" replied the sailor, and he did as he was told.

CHAPTER XX.

A RUNNING FIGHT.

In order to mask her movements, Jack submerged the submarine boat until her decks were upon a level with the sea, and assuming control of the wheel, he drove her towards the ships.

He saw that the Fox had reached the strange vessel, and grappled her, when the sound of pistol shots reached their ears.

"The rascal is carrying out his intention of piracy," said the boy, "and is attacking that craft for the purpose of robbing her."

"We will reach him before he can carry out his intention," said the detective calculatingly. "We are within half a mile now."

"Fritz, man the gun on deck."

"Yah!"

"Tim!"

"Aye, aye!"

"Bring out the small arms."

"Aye, aye, lad!"

The boy had his boat plunging on at full speed.

Soon she hove up to within a short distance of the ships.

Jack then brought her to the surface, and shouted to Fritz:

"Give the Fox a shot!"

The Dutch boy nodded, sighted the gun and fired it.

No report followed, but the projectile whistled as it flew up in the air, and a wild yell pealed from the wreckers.

"They know we are here now," grimly said Jack.

He started the Sleuth-Hound again, for he saw that the rascals were swarming over the deck of their intended victim.

But the pirates, for such they now were, saw the submarine boat, and ceasing hostilities, they hurried aboard their own craft.

Severing her fastenings, they sailed away before the wind, leaving the stranger to drift away, and the Sleuth-Hound pursued her.

The Fox had not gone fifty yards away from the strange ship when Dan Clifford ordered his gunners to fire at the Sleuth-Hound.

The rascals were provided with heavy guns and expert gunners, for, despite their confusion, when they fired at the submarine boat the first shot carried away the roof of the after dack-house.

It was now impossible to submerge the Sleuth-Hound.

Jack was exasperated.

"Give them another shot, Fritz!" he cried.

"Shall I sink her?" asked the Dutch boy.

"No. We may lose the treasure if you do."

"Den I plow her deck's off," said Fritz.

He let drive a second shot, and it struck the Fox in the midship section near the scupper holes.

The damage it created was terrific.

"The Fox is heading for the shore, Wright," said Bunker.

"Aye, and here comes another shot from her," the boy replied.

The thunder of a gun pealed out, and a ball came whistling toward the submarine boat, but by a dexterous whirl of the wheel Jack sent his boat flying off at an angle, and the ball missed its mark.

By this time the piratical vessel was within one hundred yards of the coast, and went plunging ahead, bow on.

"Fritz, fire again!" shouted the boy.

The fat boy complied.

When the projectile struck the Fox it penetrated the water line, and tore an enormous hole in the vessel's hull.

She instantly began to fill up and sink.

A scene of dire confusion then ensued among her crew, for they saw it was impossible to save the vessel from foundering.

Down went the boats, and they were filled rapidly.

Jack now drove the Sleuth-Hound toward them, for not a man remained on the deck of the sinking Fox to work her guns.

"Sink the boat, Fritz!" was the boy's order.

"No, no!" replied Fritz. "Dey vhas all got de waluables mit 'em."

"Have they? Then we will try to capture them."

And so saying, Jack drove the Sleuth-Hound toward the boats, which were being pulled rapidly toward the land.

A few minutes afterward the Fox sank.

In among the boats dashed the submarine boat, when their desperate crews opened fire upon our friends with their rifles and pistols, and Fritz ran inside to escape the bullets.

It now became necessary to shut the windows, and Tim came in with the small arms, Bunker, Jack and Fritz hastily selecting their weapons.

In the metal shutters there were several loopholes, through which the occupants of the boat could fire, and they at once returned the shots of the boats' crews with interest.

Before many of the wreckers were injured their quarter-boats were beached, they sprang ashore, and running toward a growth of timber, they shielded themselves behind the trunks.

Jack brought his boat to a pause.

He was deeply chagrined over their escape.

"They've got the best of us now!" he remarked bitterly.

"Only a few of them got wounded, and there is every likelihood of the entire gang getting away inland with the treasure. Bunker, I'm disgusted."

"It's too dangerous for us to follow them ashore. There are too many to contend with," said the detective in despair.

"Vell, dey don't vhas got dot shibs left to dackle some more vessels on der vater," said Fritz in satisfied tones.

"Better veer off inter deeper water, my lad," advised Tim just then, as he cast his glance out through one of the loopholes. "Thar's a strong undertow here, an' it's likely ter heave us ashore if we gits too close to ther surf."

Jack steered the Sleuth-Hound out into deep water, followed by a derisive yell from his enemies among the trees.

He now saw that the place where the Fox had gone down was in shallow water, for the most of her masts were projecting above the surface in plain view.

Moreover, he saw that the tide was very high.

An idea occurred to the boy, and with a more cheerful look he said:

"By Jove! I don't believe we have seen the last of those rascals yet."

"What do you mean by that?" eagerly asked the detective.

"Do you see the masts of the Fox over there?"

"Of course. She has sunk in shallow water, hasn't she?"

"When the tide is out I predict that she will be high and dry."

"It looks likely enough."

"Her crew realize this, too. Now, if there is any chance of patching her up to get her afloat again, or the remotest possibility of saving any of her valuables, those fellows will hang around this section of the coast until we go away to do it."

"Shiminey Christmas! Dot is so!" said Fritz.

"Then we will have a chance to fix them."

Jack's words had a magical effect upon his friends, for the glum looks left their faces, and they all brightened up wonderfully.

"What d'yer perpose ter do, then, Jack?" asked the old sailor.

"Make a pretense of leaving here, and come back in a roundabout way, take them by surprise, and capture the whole gang."

"Aye, but we can't go under water no more," said Tim.

"I know that to my sorrow, but there are more ways than one to kill a cat, you know, and I'll find an expedient. For the present, let us run out to the ship Dan Clifford tackled and see what damage was done there. Then we can carry out our plan."

The vessel in question was under sail a mile away, and the Sleuth-Hound ran after her and soon reached her.

Jack hailed the captain, and running alongside he boarded the vessel, and was met at the gangway by its skipper, who proved to be an American.

The boy had a protracted conversation with him, and learned that several of his men had been wounded in the fray with the pirates while defending their ship.

The vessel was bound from Tabasco to Charleston, and was laden with a valuable cargo, which would have proven a rich haul for the pirates had they gained their point.

Luckily Jack baffled this design, and the captain was very profuse in his thanks for what Jack had done to help him.

Returning to the Sleuth-Hound, the boy left the ship to go on its way, and then made an examination of the damage done to his own craft by his enemies.

The roof of the deck-house had been carried away.

It was now impossible to submerge the boat any more than the depth of her hull for concealment, nor could the damage be repaired, as the boy did not have the necessities to do so aboard.

Having satisfied himself with the condition of the boat, the boy next took a careful survey of the coast with his glass, and saw that it was indented by numerous bays, lagoons, creeks and uneven projections.

He selected a spot to land at several miles down the river, and then submerging the boat to her decks, he ran out to

sea until they attained a distance, from whence those on shore could not follow her movements, turned around and ran back for shore.

They reached the coast several miles from where the Fox had sunk, and here the boy hugged the shore, and covertly crept back to where they had left the wreckers concealed among the trees.

A small, sheltering bay was found within half a mile of the place, into which Jack drove his boat, and here they came to anchor among the bushes that lined the shore.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN AMERICAN LION.

On the following morning Fritz served up an excellent breakfast, and Jack sent Bunker up on top of an adjacent cliff abutting on the sea, to watch the movements of the wreckers.

The detective was gone an hour before he returned, and then he had a glowing smile upon his face, as he said:

"Wright, your theory was correct after all. I admire your shrewdness. The receding tide has left the Fox high and dry on the sand. I saw a number of the wreckers come out of the woods and board her. They have been making an effort to patch her up. But the tide is coming in so fast again that they had to secure the ship where she was to prevent her drifting off, and when I came down just now they were bringing in a shore-line."

The boy went up to the cliff-top, and remained there several hours, watching the movements of his enemies with a glass.

He observed that they had made camp in a clear space on the margin of the woods that was surrounded by rocks.

In the midst of the clearing he made out a spring bubbling up from the ground, and trickling down to the sea in a tiny stream.

When he came down from the cliff he found luncheon ready and explained his plan of procedure to the rest.

"Should we get in trouble," said the boy, "we will warn you of it by the sound of firearms, and you can come to our aid."

Late in the afternoon the tide began to run out again, and Jack and Fritz armed themselves, the boy took a bottle from the medicine chest, and they left the boat together.

"If you exercise the utmost care," said Jack, as they went along through the dense foliage that covered the ground, "we can get the best of the whole crowd with scarcely a struggle. Unless my plan succeeds I'm afraid we will never get the treasure."

"I vill do vot effer you say," replied Fritz.

They found the jungle denser as they proceeded, and had considerable trouble pushing their way through it, but they pressed on with determination and soon covered half the distance to the camp.

Presently they came to an opening among the trees, and glancing through, they had a good view of the beach at the place where the Fox had gone down.

The tide was fast running out, leaving the ship bared on the sand, and they saw a number of the wreckers swarming out toward her waist deep to continue their work.

"I don't believe there's a man left at their camp," said Jack, in low tones, "so we will have the whole thing to ourselves."

"Look oudt dey didn't vhas left a guard."

"The best way is to get around in back of the rocks. Then we can creep up, and carry out our purpose without any trouble."

Fritz nodded, and flitting along like phantoms, they crept around the camp and got up into the shadow of the rocks.

Peering out into the clearing, they did not see a soul.

Jack then skulked out boldly, and made his way along the ground toward the spring, beside which he paused.

Here he drew the bottle from his pocket, which he had taken from the medicine chest, and emptied its contents into the spring.

It was a powerful drug, and coated the bottom of the pool, where it would remain a day drugging the water before its effects wore away and left the water fit to drink again.

Having accomplished his purpose, the boy was just upon the point of hastening back behind the rocks again to join Fritz, when he heard a footfall behind him.

With a violent start the boy glanced around, and was dismayed to see one of the wreckers rushing toward him.

Before he could save himself the big, hulking fellow sprang upon him, seized him by the throat, got on top of him, and holding him down on his back, began to strangle him.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

Jack had no chance to draw a weapon before the wrecker's fingers choked him into a panic, and he began to think his last hour had come, when Fritz suddenly appeared.

Upon observing the boy's peril, the young Dutchman rushed up to the wrecker and dealt him a blow with the butt of his rifle that knocked him over senseless.

The young inventor sprang to his feet and glanced around.

Not another soul was in sight, by which he inferred that this man was the only one who had been left to guard the place, but he heard the distant sound of voices approaching.

"Help me to carry the rascal into the bushes, Fritz. Some of the men are coming back from the beach, and we mustn't allow this fellow to revive and betray us!" Jack exclaimed.

They just had time to carry the man away, when some of their enemies put in an appearance in the clearing.

Having reached a secluded spot, the boys bound and gagged their prisoner, and hid his body in a clump of bushes.

Then they crept over to the rocks and watched the camp again.

Some of the wreckers had come back to prepare supper, and the two silent watchers gathered from their conversation that they expected to get the ship afloat by the next morning.

Several hours passed monotonously by before the rest of the gang came back from the beach and announced that they could do no more on the ship that night, as the tide had arisen again.

They were all tired, hungry and thirsty from their hard work, and drank freely from the drugged spring, but did not seem to show any evil effects from the doctored water.

A serious fear that the running water had washed the drug away entered Jack's mind, and caused him the greatest uneasiness.

Within an hour, however, this fear was abruptly dispelled, for the drug had been slow to act, and took time to overcome the men.

One by one they laid down, overwhelmed by drowsiness, and within half an hour the whole crew were asleep.

The two boys assured themselves that they were not shamming, and then quietly crept from their covert and approached them.

There could be no mistake now about the efficacy of the

drug, and there was plenty of rope lying around, which the wreckers had taken ashore from the Fox. The boys bound every one of the rascals hand and foot, while they slept, rendering them utterly helpless.

"At last! They are in our power!" cried Jack, joyfully.

"Hurray fer us!" chuckled Fritz. "Ach! Ve vhas lulus!"

"Let us search them and recover the treasure."

"All righd, mine poy, und here goes mit der first one."

They rapidly ransacked the pockets of the gang, and to their delight recovered from the sleeping Dan Clifford the money, papers and bonds which had been stolen from the bank.

The two boys then lifted the thief up between them and carried him back to the Sleuth-Hound, where they put him in irons and explained to Tim and Bunker what had happened.

"Here's the money, bonds and papers," said the boy, laying them upon the table, "and we've got Dan Clifford as safe as a bug in a rug. Now what shall we do with his crew?"

"There's a solution for that question," said Bunker.

He pointed out the window, and as they glanced out at sea they saw a coasting schooner drifting along.

It was the same vessel which Dan Clifford and his gang of ruffians had attacked and robbed.

"You suggest putting the rascals in the hands of the crew of that vessel, then?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

"Very well."

The moorings were thereupon cast off, and Jack manned the wheel of the Sleuth-Hound and drove her out to sea.

The schooner was but a league away, and they soon overhauled her, and Jack gave her a hail.

"Schooner ahoy!" he cried. "Haul to! I want to come aboard!"

"Aye, aye!" was the reply, as the boats came together.

Jack thereupon got on the vessel's deck and saluted the captain.

"I've got good news for you, captain," said the boy, in Spanish.

"What now?" queried the skipper. "Your words are welcome, for I've been very disconsolate, and was just bringing my schooner to Vera Cruz to report the piracy made upon her to the authorities."

"There's no need of that now," cheerily answered Jack, "for I have overwhelmed the pirates, sunk their craft, and have the whole crew at my mercy for you to dispose of."

"It would be a barren revenge, as my goods are lost."

"Ah, but they ain't lost," said Jack smilingly.

"Didn't you say that their ship sunk?"

"In shoal water, which the low tide leaves bared."

"Thank heaven for that! Where does she lie?"

"I will pilot you to the spot, and leave the ship, her cargo and crew in your hands. Let me take the wheel, sir."

The captain and crew were delighted at Jack's news, and gladly let him steer their vessel up the coast.

When they arrived at the Fox the boy pointed her out, and the schooner came to anchor with sails down.

A boat was lowered, and Jack then brought the captain ashore and showed him the sleeping prisoners.

They then returned to their vessels, and the grateful skipper shook hands with Jack, and said in broken tones:

"God bless you!"

Jack returned aboard of the Sleuth-Hound, and told his friends what had transpired, and it met with their approbation.

"They will be put in prison now, as the captain said he intended to give them up to the authorities, so we have nothing to do now but return home," said the boy.

"And I'm not sorry, for one," said Bunker, "for we have

had a longer cruise than I counted on, and I'm glad it's over."

"Which shows as yer a landlubber," said Tim, with a grin. "An' that reminds me o' a leetle story of wot——"

"Don't, for heaven's sake!" implored the detective.

"Werry well," curtly answered Tim; "but yer don't know wot yer missin'."

The Sleuth-Hound was thereupon gotten under way and started for home, the sea being as smooth as glass around her, and the sky bespangled with glittering stars.

The homeward trip was uneventful, save when Jack went in to see his manacled prisoner, and explained the situation to him.

Dan Clifford was filled with rage and chagrin. He raved and swore, threatened and reproached, and the boy finally left him half maddened at the prospect of going to prison for his crime.

In due course of time the Sleuth-Hound reached New York.

Here Jack went ashore with the detective, his prisoner and the contents of the stolen box, and they went to the robbed bank.

Great was the surprise and joy of the bank officials to get back their lost property, and they thanked Jack and paid him the promised reward without a murmur.

Dan Clifford was put in jail by Rob Bunker, and in due time his guilt was proven in court, and he he was sent to Sing Sing for a long term with his confederates, while the detective resumed his profession.

Jack and his friends divided the reward among themselves, and the Sleuth-Hound was sent back to Wrightstown, where they were met with an ovation by the residents.

The story of their adventures was told, and the Sleuth-Hound was taken apart and stowed away for future use, the parrot and monkey were returned to their quarters in the house, and our friends settled back into their regular way of living.

They never heard what became of the wreckers, but it is fair to presume that the captain of the schooner had them dealt with as they deserved, and recovered his goods from the wreck of the Fox.

The young inventor was never idle.

During the time the boy had been tracking the under-water treasure, his fertile brain had been devising a new invention, and he now began to devote himself to building it.

We hope soon to show our readers what it was, and all it accomplished for the boy and his friends, but for the present we must leave them.

THE END.

Read "THE FATAL GLASS; OR, THE TRAPS AND SNARES OF NEW YORK. A TRUE TEMPERANCE STORY," by Jno. B. Dowd, which will be the next number (243) of "Pluck and Luck."

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.... " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....

.... " " SECRET SERVICE, Nos.....

.... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....

.... " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....